

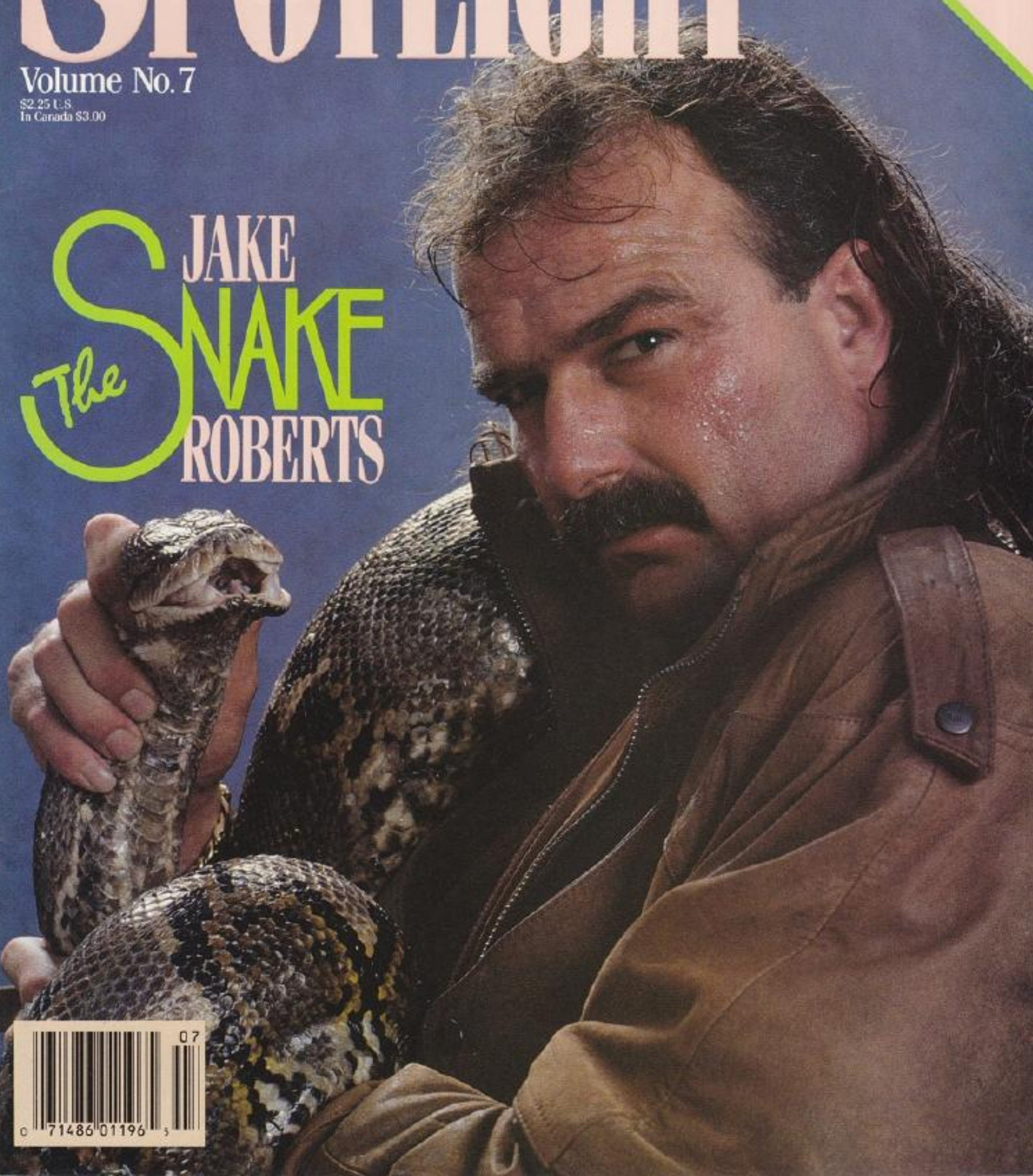
WWF WRESTLING SPOTLIGHT®

Volume No. 7

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JAKE
The SNAKE
ROBERTS

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TWO GIANT
JAKE THE SNAKE
POSTERS

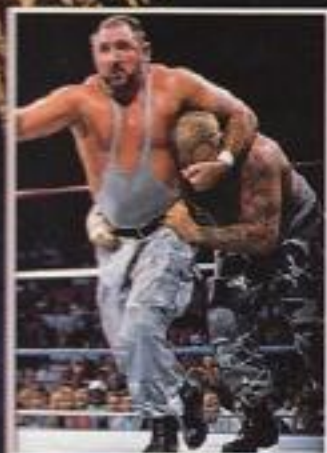


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S P O T L I G H T

A Note From The Publisher



Cover Photo: Steve Taylor

H

E IS, TO A large degree, a man of mystery, a man apart. His eyes seldom betray emotion, but they can be cold and deadly. He speaks quietly, often hardly above a whisper. Yet the sound of his voice can fill one's soul with dread. There is an aura about Jake "The Snake" Roberts that says, "This is a dangerous man."

When we met to discuss the subject of this issue of *WWF Wrestling Spotlight*, the choice was unanimous. It was time for Jake "The Snake" Roberts. The problem, however, was how to accurately portray the complex personality of this man who sometimes sounds like a mystic, who often personifies the qualities of the huge python that accompanies him to ringside. We went to Jake and listened to him, spellbound.

In the pages to come, you'll read about Jake's spectacular WWF debut and his rise through the ranks. You'll follow his career as he faced and conquered opponents bent on his demise.

We have also examined Jake's fluid yet dynamic wrestling style, and we've taken you inside Jake's head to see what makes him tick. Best of all, perhaps, we've let Jake Roberts speak for himself about himself and how he views the world.

Without further ado, we give you Jake "The Snake" Roberts, master of the DDT.

Tom H.W. Emanuel
Publisher &
Editor-in-Chief

Jake "The Snake" Roberts

by Lou Gianfriddo

His Career Chronicle

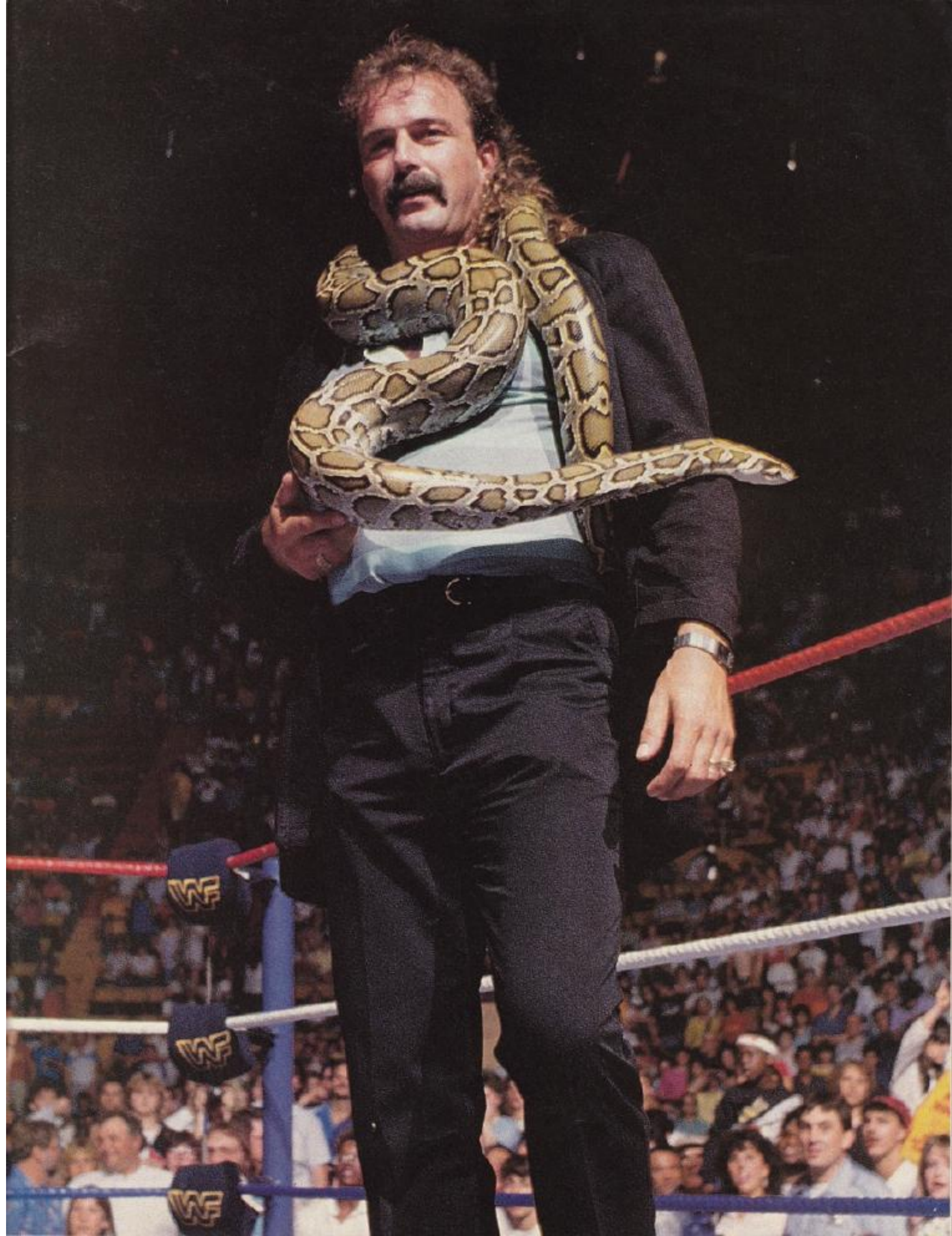
ON A COLD NIGHT IN early 1986, fans recoiled in horror when newcomer Jake "The Snake" Roberts let his enormous python, Damian, slither over the beaten form of Leaping Lanny Poffo, now known as the Genius. WWF followers had never witnessed anything so scary.

Nor had they seen anything quite like the way that Jake polished off his first opponent at New York's Madison Square Garden. From the beginning of the match, Jake was the clear aggressor, punching Poffo in the stomach and dropping knees to the back of his head. Then after hiding many illegal tactics from the referee, the Snake continued his battle on the arena floor, where he unmercifully hip-tossed Lanny back-first onto the cement.

Jake, however, wasn't through with his foe. The Snake wanted to show everyone that cruelty runs deep in his veins. After Poffo recovered from the hip-toss, he staggered his way into the ring. There stood Jake, smiling coolly. Once Lanny was fully in the squared circle, Jake nailed him with the speed and fluidity of a Rocky Mountain rattler and swiftly applied the DDT—a move never seen until that time.

Poffo's head struck the canvas with a thud. He was out cold, and from the sudden shock, his legs quivered uncontrollably. The fans would quiver, too, mere moments later.

Since making his debut in the World Wrestling Federation, Jake the Snake has relied on his superb physical ability to overcome a multitude of top-ranked competitors.



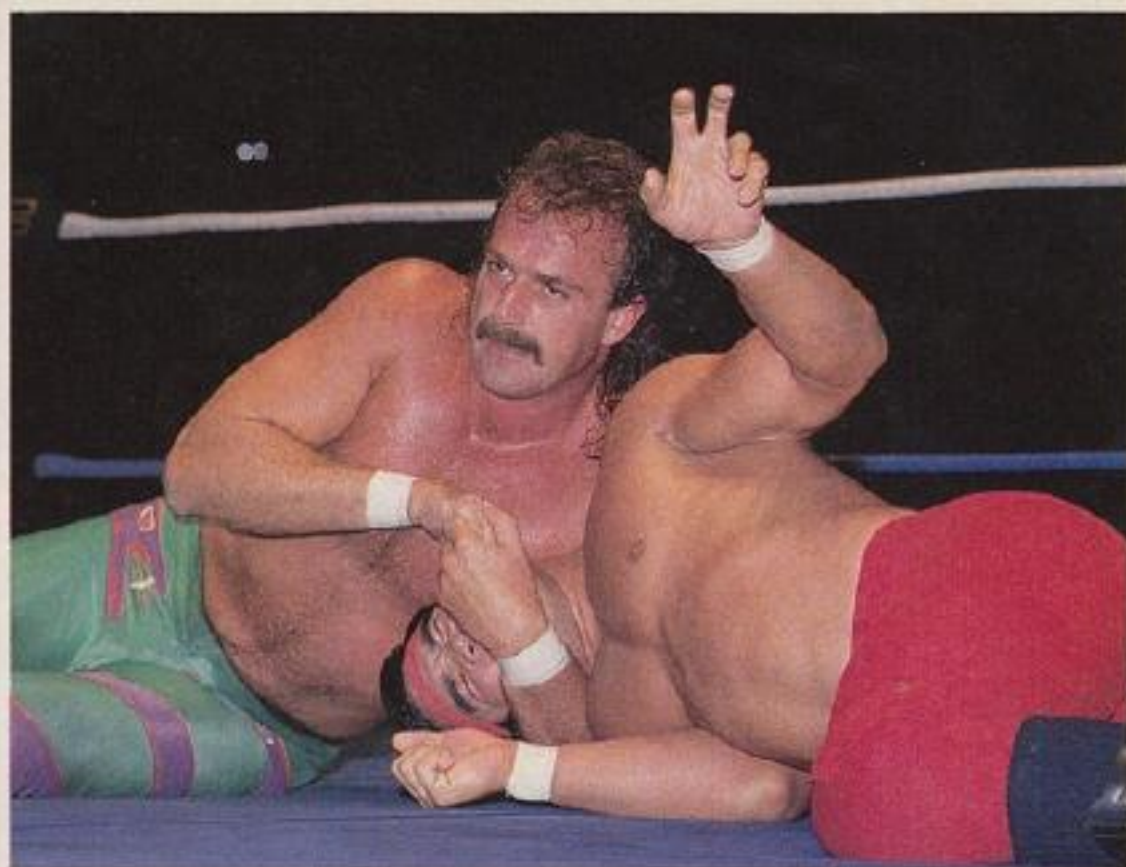


Seeing that Lanny was unconscious, Jake grabbed the bag that he had brought to ringside with him. After untying it, he reached in for his monstrous reptile and draped it on Lanny. Sticking the snake's head into Poffo's open mouth, Roberts turned to a cameraman and asked, "Who's next?"

George Wells, that was who. At *WrestleMania 2*, Jake squared off against this former football player and dispatched him effectively. This time, the whole world witnessed just how coldblooded the sinuous athlete from Stone Mountain, Georgia, really is.

Before the bell, Jake slapped Wells across the face in a psychological ploy to get underneath his skin. Enraged, George chased a backpeddling Jake and scored with a backdrop. A forearm uppercut shocked the Snake, and his eyes grew glassy. This was only a part of his master plan.

Shaking off the grogginess from Wells' blow, Jake rebounded with a wicked kneelift, which hurled Wells through the ropes to



the outside. Jumping from the ring, Jake confronted a determined Wells, who chased the Snake around the ringside area, dodging scores of photographers and members of the press. Finally, Roberts suckered his foe back into the ring, where he struck with a punishing right to the face.

At that point, the Snake, overconfident and cocky, made the mistake of turning his back on George. This was all the ex-gridiron star needed to see. As Jake slowly turned around, Wells stormed into him with a jarring shoulderblock and followed up with a head scissors and subsequent powerslam. The crowd on hand exploded into cheers, believing that this was the end of Jake Roberts.

Not by a long shot. After kicking out of a Wells' pin attempt, Jake went on the rampage, stinging George with a crushing kneelift. As if he had been baiting Wells all along, Jake suddenly caught him in the DDT. Instantly, Wells' lights were out, and he lay spreadeagled on the mat, barely breathing.

Then the same scene that frightened fans at Jake's debut was repeated. As George lay a motionless heap in the center of the ring, Roberts dipped into his big green bag of tricks. He put

Damian on his foe, and the python began constricting Wells' neck. Foam dripped from George's mouth as he struggled to breathe. Meanwhile, Roberts looked down at his writhing opponent and laughed.

"Would you look at Damian?" he asked with an admiring tone. "Doesn't it look as if the snake's havin' fun?"

Having seen enough, Jake pulled Damian off Wells and returned the snake to its sack. As a result of this match, the Snake earned the reputation of being an extremely dangerous individual.

"You know, I never asked anybody to like me," Jake hissed that night to a reporter. "But what I like is playin' with people's minds, beatin' them and then lettin' Damian play. There's a lot of people duckin' me here in the WWF. Yeah, men like Ricky Steamboat! He calls himself the Dragon. Well, in due time the Snake will be the dragon slayer."

Jake was right. During a match on *Saturday Night's Main Event*, the Snake slew the Dragon in Ricky Steamboat. While on the outside of the ring, Roberts used a DDT to crash Steamboat's head on the floor, knocking the Hawaiian unconscious.

With the Dragon out like a light, Roberts grabbed Damian and let



At WrestleMania 2, Jake's viciousness was witnessed worldwide when he demolished George Wells. Shortly thereafter, Roberts battled Ricky Steamboat and then went on to host his own TV show dubbed *The Snake Pit*. There, Jake would interview people with a no-holds-barred attitude.

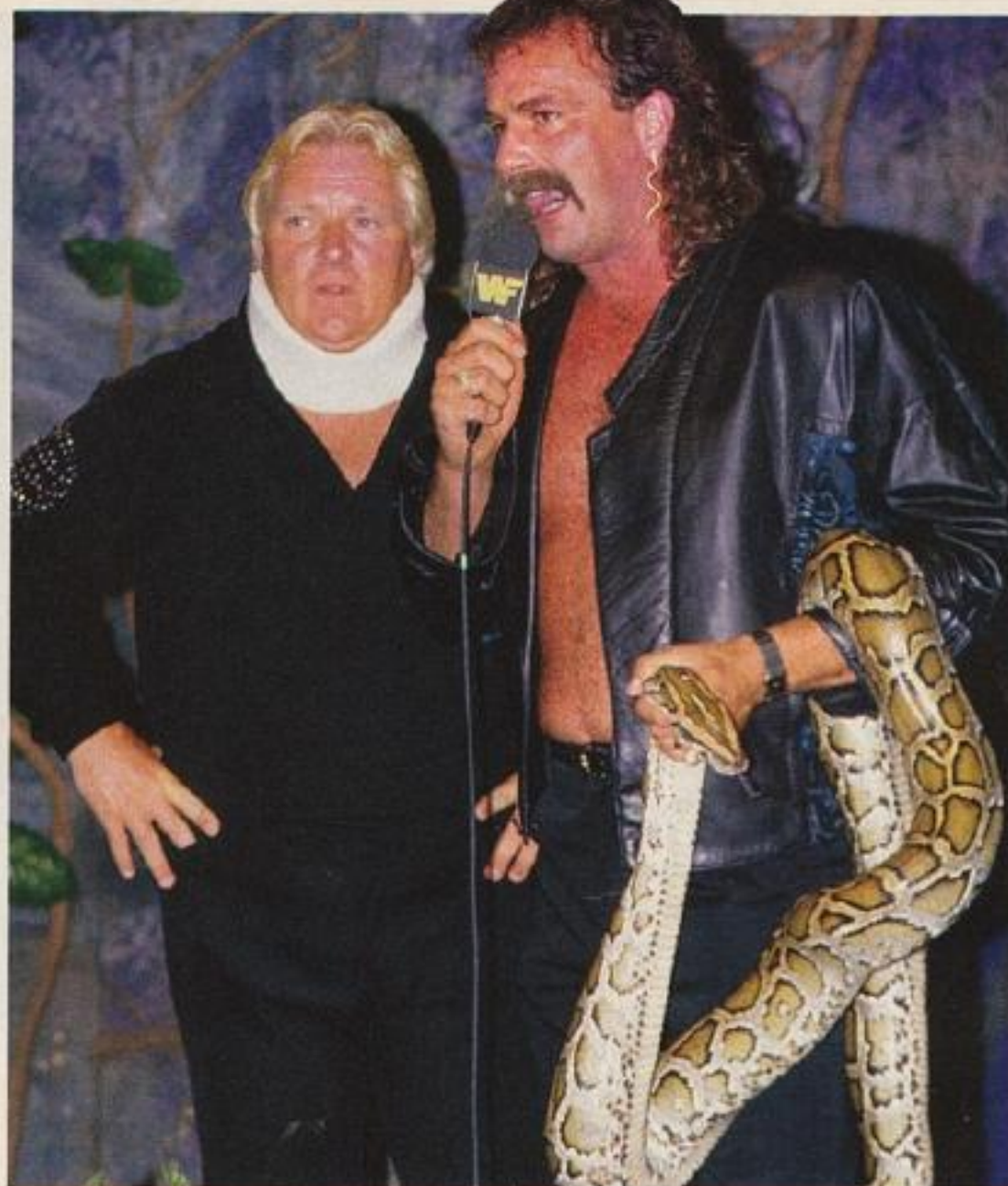
the now-infamous scaly creature wander on Ricky's frame. While this was going on, Steamboat's wife, Bonnie, shrieked in terror at the sight of Damian poking his arrowlike head into her husband's mouth.

"Now what do you think of your hero?" the Snake asked Bonnie.

Because of this ugly incident, a rematch was in order. After being out of action for several weeks with a concussion, Ricky Steamboat returned to battle the Snake, and their match went down as one the most violent confrontations of 1986.

However, that's exactly what Jake wanted. As Ricky came down the runway, Jake was on him, and the two superstars battled tooth and nail on the arena floor. Both men exchanged series of punches and kicks. Moments later, the uncontrollable conflict raged into the ring.

There, Jake seized the moment by kicking Ricky in the ribs as he came off the ropes. With Steam-



boat's head down, Jake tried to end the match quickly and front-facelocked Ricky in preparation for the DDT. Before he could apply the move, however, the Dragon grabbed Jake's arm and fired several chops to his chest. Steamboat then took the advantage with a belly-to-belly suplex.

Somewhat dazed by Ricky's fast and furious chain of tactics, Roberts retreated to the outside to think of another strategy. Shaking his head, the Snake looked up to the ring and saw a raging Steamboat calling him on. Once he cleared the cobwebs, Jake re-entered the battle.

Steamboat picked up where he left off by ripping into his foe with chops and punches. The Dragon then went to Irish whip the Snake, but Jake reversed it and threw a roundhouse punch. All that Jake hit was air, as Ricky ducked at the last second and slid between Jake's legs.

Reacting abruptly to this, Roberts turned around and popped Steamboat in the face as he sprang to his feet. The pendulum swung Jake's way, and the calculating athlete took full advantage of it by jarring Ricky's spinal column with a reverse atomic drop. On a roll, Jake fired a short-arm clothesline and a sequence of painful punches and knees before tossing Steamboat over the top ropes.

Speedily bouncing back, Steamboat jumped up to the ring apron and went to sunset flip the Snake. Jake foiled Ricky's tactic with a punch right between his eyes and a hard bodyslam. While the Dragon held his lower back in agony, Roberts pointed toward the bag with Damian in it. After another slam, Jake grabbed the bag and began to untie it. Fearing the contents inside, the referee raced over to the corner and physically prevented Jake from going any further.



Valuable seconds passed. By the time the Snake and the arbiter finished their dispute, Steamboat was slouched across the ring on the turnbuckles. Seeing this, Roberts charged full steam ahead at Ricky with a shoulderblock.

With a clear head, the Dragon watched every step Jake made and timed it. When the Snake was close enough, Ricky side-stepped him and swept Jake's leg, sending him flying into the air. A Steamboat swinging neck-breaker put Jake in a very vulnerable position.

The Dragon leapt up and aimed a karate chop at Roberts' head. As Ricky came down, Jake instinctively raised his legs and caught Steamboat in the ribs. With the tide of battle once again in his favor, Jake brawled with Ricky around ringside. The Snake, harboring hopes of permanently injuring the Dragon, prepared to DDT him once more on the cement, but this time, Steamboat was ready for it.

Using his strength, Ricky blocked the move and retaliated by slamming Jake's head into a barricade. The Dragon then threw the Snake back into the ring, where Steamboat unleashed a barrage of tortuous tactics. Despite the pounding, Jake managed to fight back by choking Ricky in a corner. Gasping for breath, the Dragon tried everything to break free of Roberts' tight grasp. Nothing worked. The referee acted on the situation by wedging himself between the two. However, Steamboat, kicking wildly, accidentally booted the official, who awarded the match to Roberts due to a disqualification.

After his match with Steamboat,



Roberts had these comments: "Ricky Steamboat, I didn't want to wrestle you, my man. I wanted to end your career. And you fought me to your last breath. Now, don't get me wrong, I don't like Ricky Steamboat, but I respect him for his guts. Call it a change of attitude. Call it whatever you want. Just don't call it a compliment."

Those last words best describe how Jake Roberts is built. Whether he hates someone or likes him, the Snake will always say what's on his mind. In late 1986 and into 1987, Jake did just that while hosting his own segment on the WWF Television Network entitled *The Snake Pit*.

Week after week, Roberts would invite some of the WWF's most controversial superstars to appear on his show. Most often, Jake would tell these individuals how he felt about them, and sometimes certain wrestlers didn't want to hear it. In time, however, the Snake's straightforward approach on *The Snake Pit* earned him the cheers of the fans.

But not of the Honky Tonk Man. On one edition, Jake called out Honky and his manager, Colonel Jimmy Hart, for an interview. Hold-

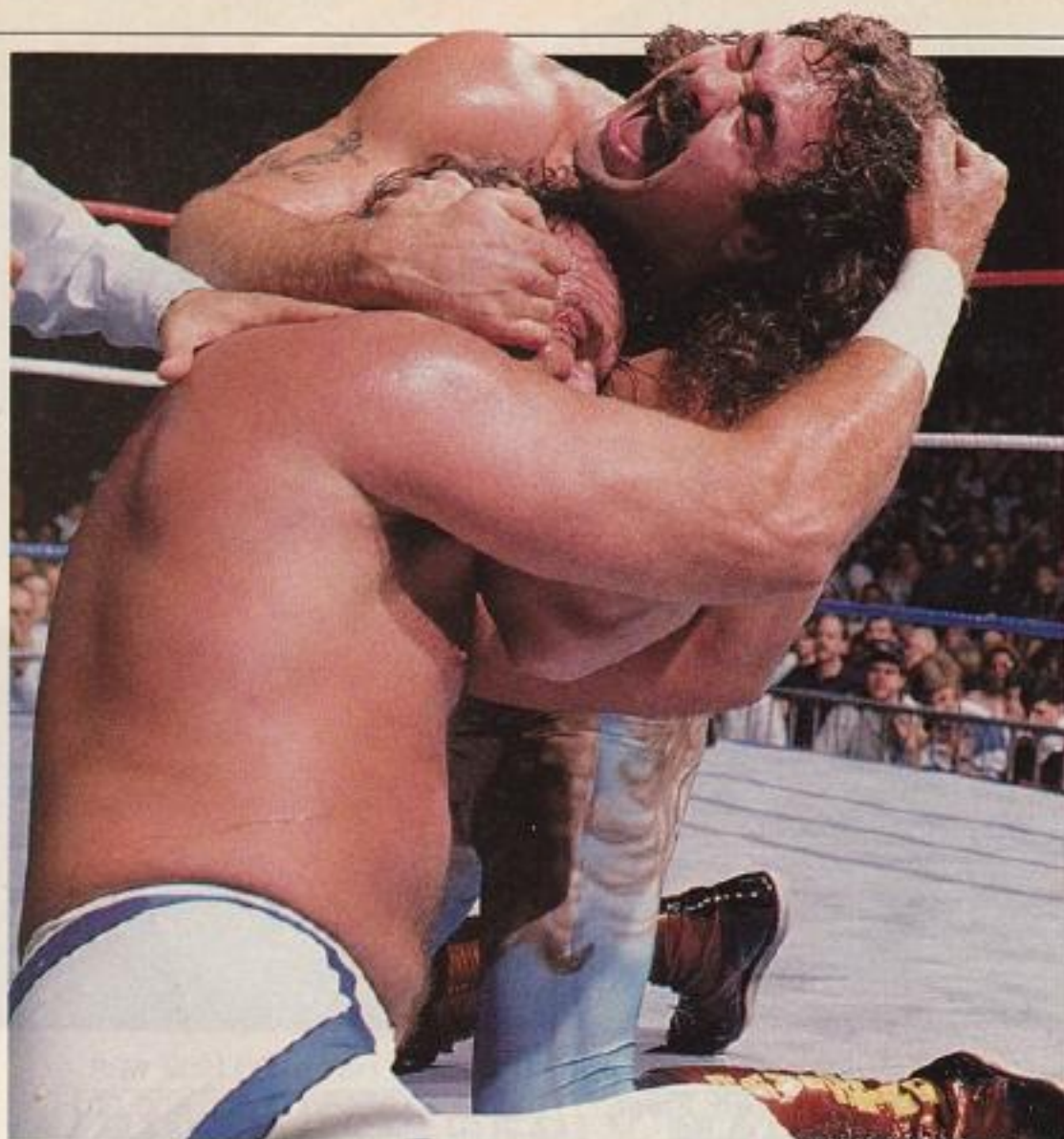
WrestleMania III saw Roberts battle the Honky Tonk Man. Honky bested Roberts by grabbing the ropes during the pin. Wanting revenge, Jake and Alice Cooper threw Damian on the Colonel. Then Jake collided with Rick Rude after Rude insulted Roberts' wife, Cheryl.

ing his guitar, Honky vowed that he was going to sing for the audience. Not wanting to hear this, Jake kept pointing Damian at the Elvis impersonator, scaring him and his mentor off the set. Laughing, the Snake looked high and low for the fleeing duo.

"Don't worry, Damian isn't gonna hurt you," Jake promised.

However, Honky was going to hurt Jake—and in a big way. While the Snake's attention was still diverted, Honky crept up from behind and bashed his guitar over Jake's skull. Upon impact, the instrument shattered into a thousand splinters, as Jake fell to the ground. As a result of this vile attack, retribution was in order.

Roberts sought his revenge against Honky during *WrestleMania III* at the Pontiac Silverdome. To make sure Jimmy Hart would stay out of his matters,



Jake had shock-rock legend Alice Cooper stand in his corner for the contest. In the end, Alice turned out to be a good insurance policy and then some.

Jake was pumped up and ready for this matchup. As Honky was carried down the long runway on a mobile, small-scale wrestling ring, Jake coldly stared straight ahead at him and bounced from foot to foot. The closer Honky came to the squared circle, the more fury built inside of the Snake. Once Honky set foot on the ring apron, Roberts exploded like Mount St. Helens!

Like lightning, Jake bolted across the ring and pounded on Honky with a vengeance. Seething, Jake flipped the still-robed Honky Tonk over the ropes and pummeled him with jabs, snapping his head back with every punch. In desperation, Honky bounced Jake off the ropes and went for a bodydrop. Wise to the move, the Snake stopped dead in his tracks and snapped a knee into Honky's nose.

This was too much for Honky,

so he scooted under the ropes to the floor for a breather. The Snake was hot on his heels. Jumping to the outside, Jake chased Honky around ringside, caught him and laced him with thunderous blows.

After slamming Honky on the concrete, Jake brought the battle back into the ring, where the Snake maintained control by whipping Honky to the buckles. Like a speeding locomotive, Roberts charged Honky in the corner, but Honky promptly raised his knees just in the nick of time, catching Jake under the chin and knocking him to the mat.

With the Snake down, Honky went to work, kicking Jake and then softening up his arm with punches. Looking to disable his sly foe, Honky kept beating on the arm until he missed with a wild haymaker.

Jake capitalized on Honky's error with a stiff right to Honky Tonk's jaw and then scored with a short-arm clothesline that knocked Honky for a loop. The fans at the Silverdome erupted into cheers and began chanting, "DDT! DDT!"



That's exactly what the Snake was thinking. Rapidly, Roberts cinched Honky in a front facelock for the move, but the grease on Honky's hair enabled Honky to slip free.

Not wasting any time, Honky again went to the outside, and Jake followed him. A brief brawl ensued, and Honky Tonk got the better of Jake when the flamboyant athlete whipped Roberts shoulder-first into the steel ring-post. The force almost dislocated the Snake's shoulder, and Alice Cooper knew he was in trouble. Grabbing him by the arm, the musician aided the Snake to his feet. Fighting off the numbness in his shoulder, Jake attempted to re-enter the fray, but Honky Tonk stopped him by booting him back down. Finally, the referee ordered Honky to back off so Jake could regain the ring.

Once between the ropes, Honky was all over the Snake, first slamming him and then dropping a fist to his forehead. Capitalizing on his advantage, Honky continued his attack with an axhandle and an elbow. Things weren't looking too promising for Jake, and many were expecting that he'd be yesterday's news when Honky set him up for the shake, rattle 'n' roll neckbreaker.

With a cocky smile, Honky took his time applying the match-ending move so he could wiggle his hips as a taunt. Bad move. Just when Honky began to shake, the Snake backdropped his way to



freedom. Honky crashed to the canvas and pleaded for mercy. He wouldn't get any! Riding a wave of newfound strength, Roberts went on a tear, reverse atomic-dropping Honky with a backdrop follow-through. After peppering Honky's cheeks with a few stinging blows, Jake, sensing that Honky was close to being beaten, moved in for the DDT.

As a last resort, the Colonel reached in and clutched Jake's leg. When Jake went to thrash Hart, Honky, observing that the official was distracted, rolled up the Snake and held onto the top ropes. Unaware of the circumstances, the referee made the three-count.

Honky may have won the battle, but Jake won the war. While Hart and Honky celebrated their cheap win, Jake released Damian from its cloth dungeon. Honky was the first to see it, and he immediately scurried from the ring for higher ground. Jimmy Hart was a different story. From behind, the Snake snared the Colonel in a full nelson and then ordered Cooper to grab the snake. With the huge python in his hands, Alice inched close to Hart, until the rock 'n' roller let the scaly critter move at will over Hart's shaking torso.

The next war for Jake Roberts came in the form of Ravishing Rick Rude in 1988, and it developed in a most unusual fashion.

Customarily, when Rude defeats an opponent, he searches the crowd and chooses a lovely lady



During their match, Jake went on the offensive very quickly. From there, Cheryl used a slap to bruise Rude's ego.

to be the recipient of a big wet kiss that's known as the Rude Awakening. On one occasion, Ravishing Rick selected a gorgeous woman seated in the front row. Steadfastly, she refused Rude. Undaunted, he called her up to the ring again. Still she wouldn't budge from her seat. Perhaps thinking that she needed further coaxing, Rude and his manager, Bobby Heenan, went to the outside and approached the woman. When asked who she was, the lovely female responded, "Cheryl Roberts. Wife of Jake 'The Snake' Roberts."

Fuming over the fact that she was happily married and didn't consider him attractive, Rude lashed out by insulting Cheryl and her husband. Finally, Cheryl had had enough and slapped Rude across the face. Enraged, Rick grabbed Cheryl's wrist and threatened to harm her.

All of a sudden, Jake rushed down to her aid, belted Bobby Heenan and then went after

Rude. But Ravishing Rick was one step ahead of him and brutally hammered the Snake down in front of his wife's eyes.

The final and bitter battle took place on *Saturday Night's Main Event*, and Cheryl Roberts was there to watch the action as it unfolded. As soon as Jake hit the ring, he and Rude locked up like two bulls, shoving each other on the ropes. Backing Roberts into a corner, Rude fired the first blow of the match by shoulderblocking Jake. After several of these moves, however, Jake countered with a kneelift to Rude's jaw.

From there, the Snake took Rude's arm and twisted it tightly. Rude screamed in pain as Roberts applied the pressure. He even tried to escape the maneuver by jumping to the apron, but the Snake was quick to act, yanking Rude back into combat and barring his arm. Meanwhile, Cheryl sat at ringside, delighted with her husband's accomplishment.

Her eyes gleamed when Jake bombed Rude with a devastating blow after Rude leapfrogged him, and she really loved it when her husband moved in for the DDT. However, Ravishing Rick slid out

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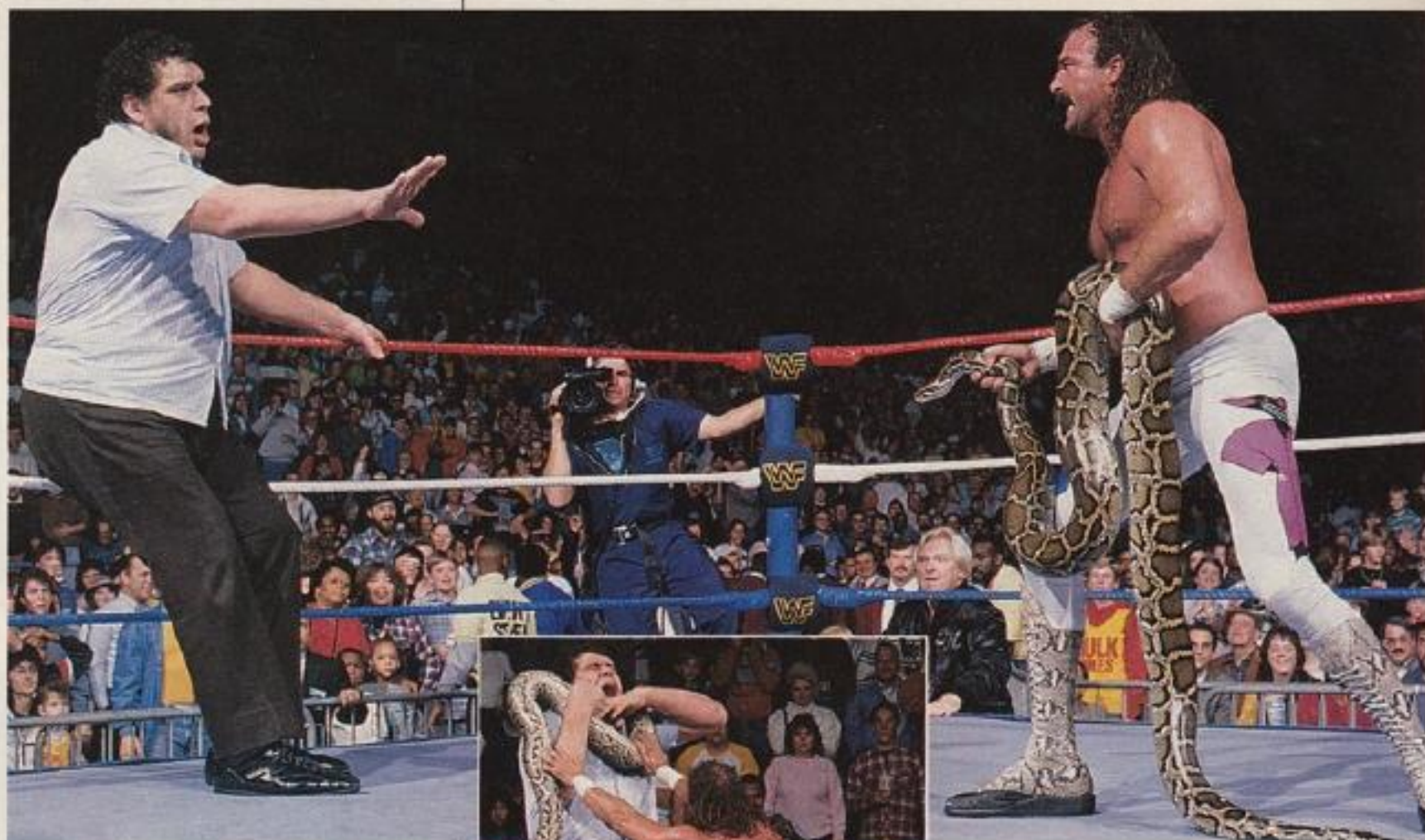
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When the Giant involved himself at the end of the Jake/Rude clash, Roberts dispatched Andre with Damian's help. Overwhelmingly frightened by Damian, Andre passed out when Jake threw the python on him. Their battle climaxed at WrestleMania V with Big John Studd officiating.

of the hold and rushed to the outside. After taking advice from Heenan, Rude got back in the ring, where he gained an advantage by clotheslining Roberts and hammering him down. Following up, Ravishing Rick rammed Jake's head into the buckle and then elbowed him in the throat. With Roberts stunned, Rude, consumed with conceit, walked in front of Cheryl and badgered her by saying, "Look at your old man now!" The Ravishing One continued

his taunting after he Irish whipped the Snake into the buckles. However, Rude took too much valuable time doing it. When he finally returned to the match, Jake had collected his senses and suddenly folded Rude's body with a jolting clothesline. Gritting his teeth and snarling, Jake went on the offensive, stinging Rude with lefts and rights. The Snake, not letting up at all, struck with a brutal bodyslam that rang Rude's bell.

Then came Cheryl Roberts' turn to get even with the man who had verbally tormented her. In the ring, Jake surfboarded Rude's arms and put his head through the middle ropes where he was eye to eye with Cheryl. Seeing Rude in this unlikely position, Mrs. Roberts got up from her seat and, at Jake's request,

hauled off and slapped the Ravishing One across the face.

Heenan, meanwhile, was livid and complained to the official about the interference. The referee listened to the Brain and ordered Cheryl to vacate the ring-side area. As she hesitantly made her way back to the dressing room, Jake and Rude were clawing it out on the floor, where Rude got the upper hand by slamming Jake into the steel ringpost.

After he recuperated from the wrenching blow, Roberts retook the ring and battled Rude with a vengeance. Jake had Rude reeling with a series of fast punches and then a bodydrop. With Rude hurting, Jake set him up for the DDT. It didn't work. Tapping into his inner reserves of strength, the Ravishing One powered his way out of the hold before the Snake cinched it in. Rude quickly



rocked Jake with an elbow.

Thinking that Roberts was ripe for the pickings, Rude went to apply the Rude Awakening neck-breaker. However, Jake broke the tactic by biting Rude's arm. Ravishing Rick tried to ignore the pain as he bounced Jake off the ropes for a backdrop. Coming off the strands, Jake clutched Rude by the head in a facelock and, just like that, dimmed his lights with the DDT.

No movement was evident on Rude's fallen form. He would have been easy to pin, but Jake had other plans. Wanting to humiliate him totally, Jake began tearing Rude's tights, which had a picture of Cheryl on them. When Bobby Heenan observed this from the outside, he intervened on his protégé's behalf by repeatedly punching the Snake's back.

Fearing that Rude would be completely embarrassed, Heenan called for the heavy artillery and found it in Andre the Giant. As soon as Andre stepped over the ropes, he grabbed Jake by the neck and headbutted him out of the ring. Although dazed, Roberts realized he was outnumbered, so he took hold of his equalizer, Damian. With the slithering python in his hands, Jake entered the

squared circle and pointed its head at the Giant. Gasping with fear, Andre backedpeddled right into a corner. Jake lunged and threw Damian on Andre's body. Immediately, Andre collapsed to the canvas, clutching his heart. For the first time in history, the most fearsome man in professional athletics had a publically known fear. Andre and Roberts were destined to collide.

At *WrestleMania V*, they did meet, and it was one of the most intense matches of Jake's career. Big John Studd, a man whom the Giant despised, was appointed special referee for the contest. Even before the bell rang, Andre and Studd argued with one another. In the end, the bitter differences between these two would work in Jake's favor.

However, it didn't seem that way when Roberts stormed the ring. Like a new suit, the Giant was all over the Snake, battering him with chops and headbutts, which took their toll on Jake, who slumped to the mat. There, Andre refined his assault by dropping a big knee to the Snake's throat region.

With his eyes reflecting meanness, Andre stood Jake upright and wrenched his neck back with a chinlock. Just when it appeared

bleak, Roberts freed himself with several strategic elbows into the Giant's midsection. Out of Andre's grip, Jake swiftly made a grab for Damian, but the Giant prevented this by chinlocking Roberts against the ropes.

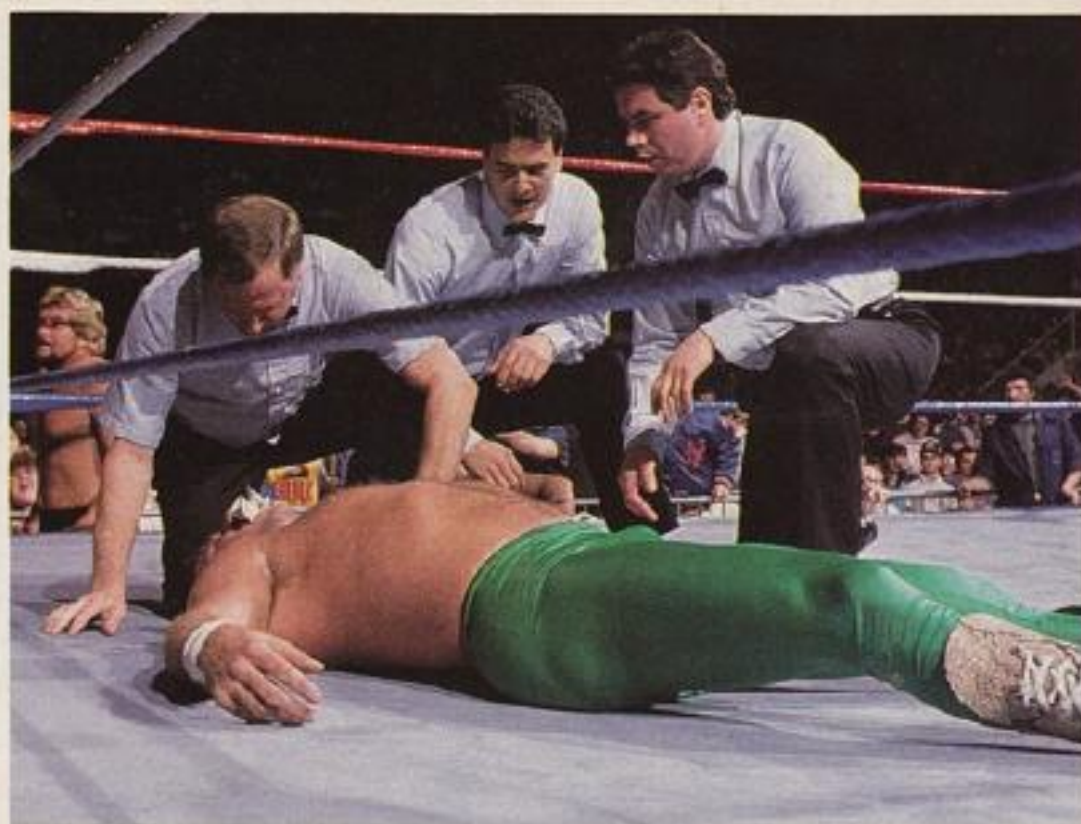
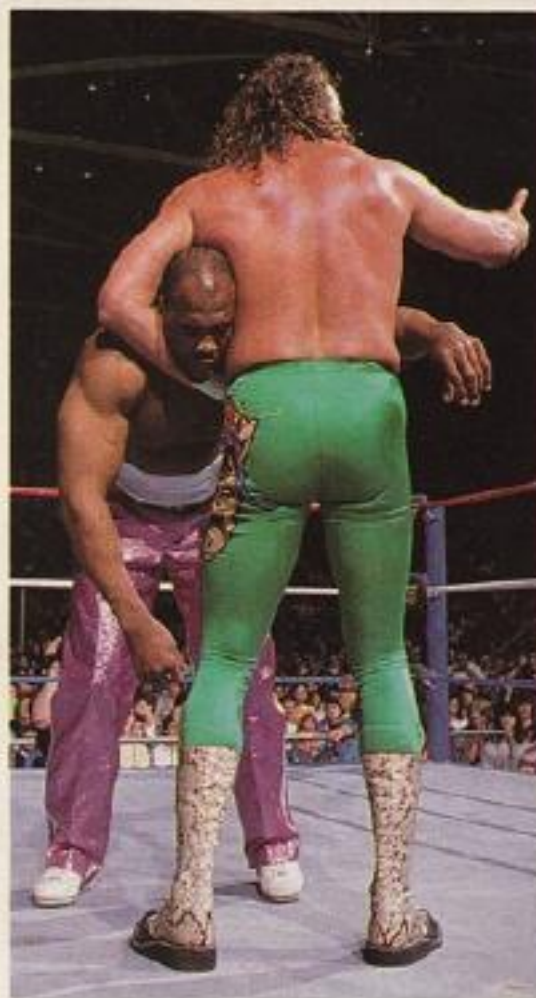
This time, the Snake broke the hold by launching blows into Andre's face. After absorbing these punches, however, Andre cocked his arm and planted his huge fist in Jake's face, staggering him severely. The Giant then maneuvered the Snake into a corner, where the mountainous Frenchman blatantly choked Roberts until he crashed to the mat. There, Andre, all 520 pounds of him, showed no mercy when he stood on the Snake's stomach. Without a moment to waste, Studd asserted himself and warned the Giant about his behavior. Andre just laughed at Big John as if he were a joke.

However, Andre's smile vanished when Jake regained his feet and went to town on his mammoth foe with fists and clotheslines. The Giant was taken aback and, after losing his balance, found himself entangled in the ropes. Roberts took advantage of the situation by choking Andre until his eyes bulged. Studd saw this, and he ordered Jake to break the illegal hold. Reluctantly, Jake backed off and allowed Big John to free the trapped Giant.

For Jake, this was a wrong move because when Andre rose and cleared his head, he tore into Jake brutally. After kicking and headbutting the Snake, Andre shoulderblocked him in the corner. A big chop later and Jake was on the outside.

Gallantly, Roberts attempted to regain the ring, but with every try, Andre cut him down with kicks. All the while, Studd screamed at the Giant because of his actions. Again, Andre ignored Big John and even pushed him. That was that. Studd pushed back, and before long, they were trying to rip one another's heads off.

During the commotion, Jake grabbed Damian and made his



Top left: Jake sets up Ted DiBiase's bodyguard, Virgil, for the DDT and then hands out DiBiase's money, below. However, DiBiase thrashed Roberts for these actions, above. Top right: Jake gained revenge by slamming Virgil's and the Million Dollar Man's heads together, right, and by taking the Million Dollar Belt, far right.

Nobody knew, especially the Snake, that this was just part of a treacherous scheme.

After Roberts easily overcame the manservant with the DDT, he handed out Virgil's money to the fans in attendance. That was all DiBiase, who was looking on in his dressing room, needed to see. When Jake returned to the ring, the Million Dollar Man decided to strike.

In a flash, DiBiase stormed the squared circle and unloaded with punches to Jake's neck. To further debilitate the Snake's neck area, DiBiase then applied his Million Dollar Dream. As a result of that Pearl Harbor job, Roberts was sidelined for several months with a cracked vertebra. Admittedly, fans and wrestlers alike thought that Jake "The Snake" Roberts was done for—finished as a professional wrestler in the WWE.

They were all wrong! The Snake came back in the summer of 1989 and immediately re-established

the fact that he wanted the Million Dollar Man in the ring.

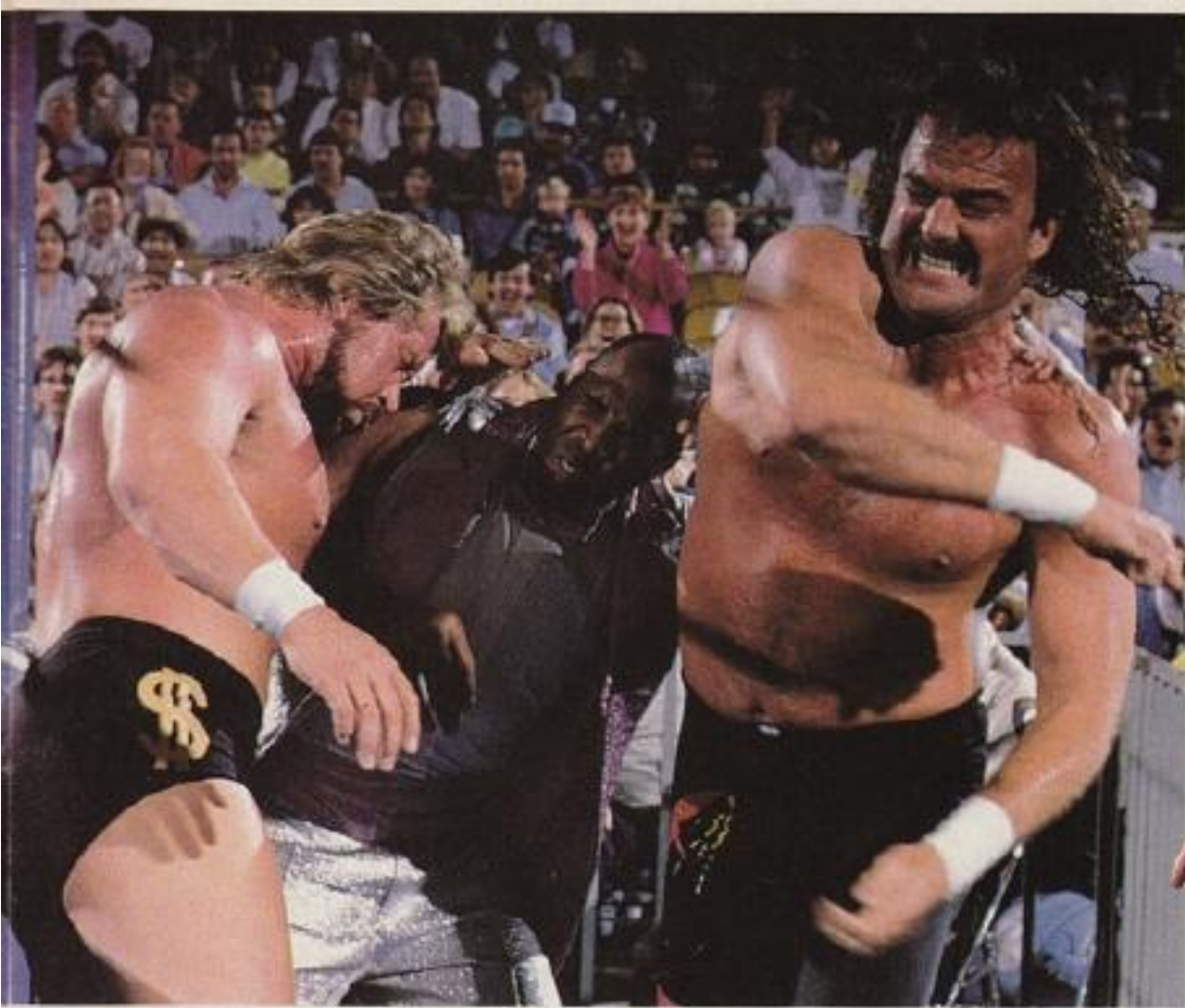
In a match held at Madison Square Garden, Jake and DiBiase went at it ferociously. From the start, the Million Dollar Man tried to end things early, as he and Virgil ganged up on the Snake, who survived a double clothesline. Then Roberts came back and scored with fiery fists to Virgil's head, which sent him flying through the ropes.

This left the Million Dollar Man and the Snake. On the warpath, Roberts hammered DiBiase and then knocked the wind out of him with a kneelift. Perhaps fearing Jake's rage, DiBiase sought refuge on the arena floor. No way. Pulsating with anger, Roberts chased his opponent around ringside until they both went back into the ring.

There, DiBiase seized control with a kneelift and punches, but Jake responded in kind by firing shots of his own. Again, the Million Dollar Man fled from the Snake's wrath. This was to be DiBiase's strategy because when he made it back to combat, he retreated once Roberts took control of things. Soon, Jake couldn't take any more, so he ran out and slammed DiBiase's head into Virgil's while they consulted with each other. From there, Roberts tossed DiBiase back into the ring, and when Jake re-entered, the

way up the ring stairs. Then, from out of nowhere, the Million Dollar Man raced down and blindsided Roberts before running off with the sack containing Damian. Recovering from DiBiase's attack, Jake managed to catch up with the Million Dollar Man and wrest Damian away from him. As Jake jogged back to the ring, DiBiase promised, "I'm not done with you, Roberts."

DiBiase was right. A few weeks after *WrestleMania V*, the Snake was scheduled to wrestle the self-dubbed Million Dollar Champion on *WWF Superstars of Wrestling*. Ailing from a supposed cold, DiBiase claimed he was told by his doctor not to step into the ring that night. Instead, he sent his bodyguard, Virgil, to wrestle Jake.



Million Dollar Man was on top of him. DiBiase went to work on the neck with jarring knees, which shot tremors of pain through the Snake's body.

"What's the matter, Jake?" DiBiase inquired. "You're human after all. Your neck isn't totally healed, is it?" After asking that, the Million Dollar Man began stomping Roberts' neck before cinching him in a front facelock.

Slowly, the Snake's strength began to ebb in DiBiase's grip. It looked grim for Jake until he managed to break the hold by backing the Million Dollar Champion into a corner. Even so, the Snake couldn't capitalize on the situation, and he fell to the mat.

DiBiase wouldn't let up as he bombed axhandles and knees to the Snake's body. Just then, the fans began to rally behind Roberts, who amazingly nailed DiBiase with a reverse neckbreaker. From that point on, it was all Jake. An atomic drop jolted the Million Dollar Man as did a number of stiff kneedrops.

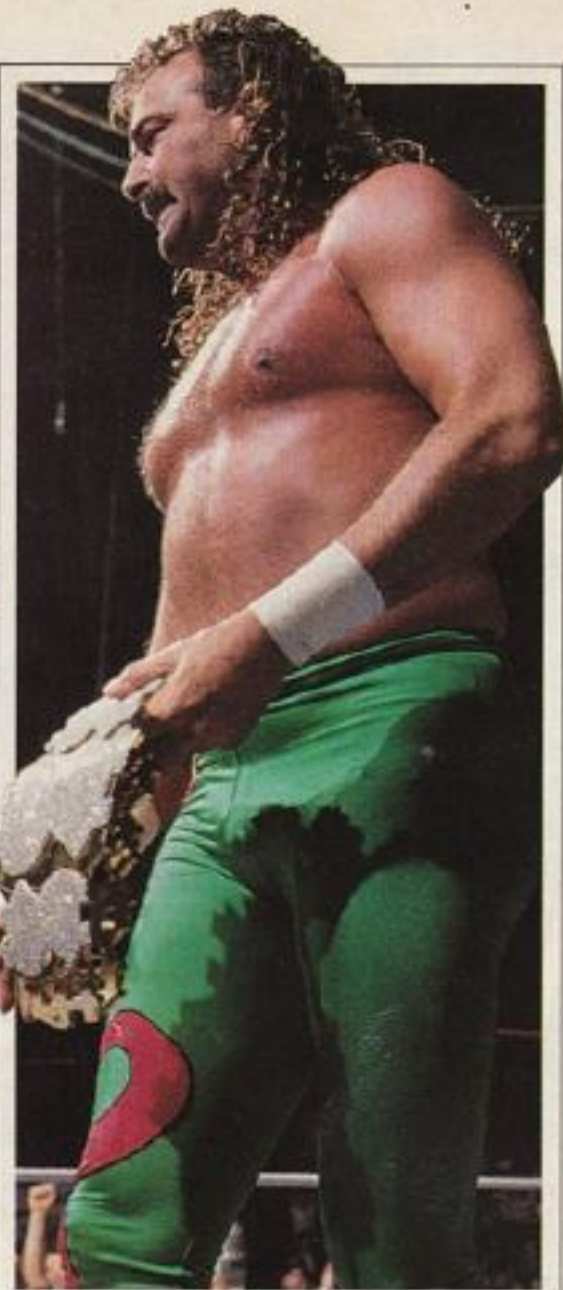
In desperation, Virgil climbed up to the ring apron and put the bad-mouth on Roberts, as Jake set up for the DDT. However, milli-

seconds before Jake crashed the Million Dollar Man's head to the canvas, Virgil came in to save the day. Winding up his thick arm, Virgil battered Jake on the side of the head, earning the Snake victory via a disqualification.

Not long afterward, Jake—wanting to permanently settle the score with DiBiase—stole DiBiase's Million Dollar Belt and placed it in the bag with Damian. Blazing with anger, the Million Dollar Man demanded that Virgil retrieve the belt, but the bodyguard, petrified of Damian, reluctantly refused to carry out his employer's order.

DiBiase, a man who usually gets what he wants, wouldn't be stopped. Utilizing his keen business sense, the Million Dollar Man made a secret deal with the Doctor of Style, Slick, to have his then-protégé, the Big Boss Man, recover the belt. And the Boss Man did just that. During a special challenge match between the Snake and the Million Dollar Man, the Boss Man, at Slick's direction, came down to ringside, cuffed up Jake and walked off with the bag.

Moments later, on *The Brother Love Show*, DiBiase thanked Slick for the paid services of the Boss



Man. However, the Boss Man wasn't aware that his manager had made a deal with DiBiase. The big Georgian was infuriated when he found out. Seething over the payoff, the Boss Man—who respects the law above anything else—walked away from Slick and DiBiase. With the bag draped over his shoulder, the Boss Man made his way to the ring, where he uncuffed Jake and handed the bag over to him.

Perhaps the final chapter of the war between Jake and DiBiase will be settled in a few weeks at *WrestleMania VI*. There, DiBiase and Jake will battle for possession of the Million Dollar Belt. *WrestleMania*, according to Roberts, will be DiBiase's last stand.

"It's come full circle, DiBiase," hisses Jake. "At *WrestleMania V*, this whole thing started between us. At *WrestleMania VI*, it will end. I'm not gonna tell you what I'm gonna do to you. The fact that I'll be ending it is what should have you worried." **WF**



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Jake the Snake Trivia Quiz

By Larry Humber

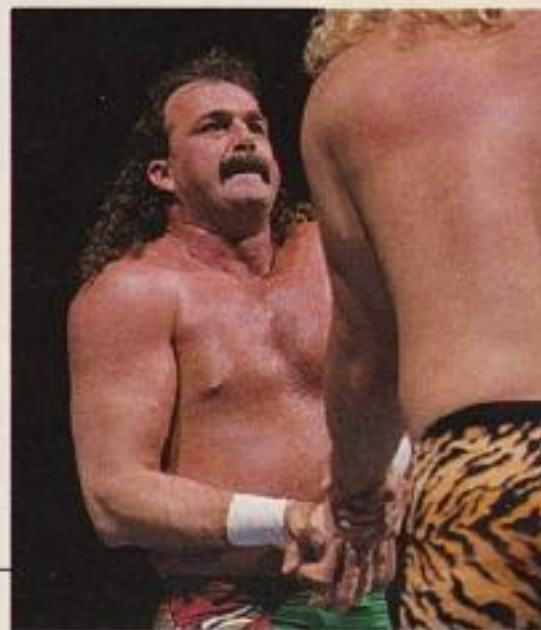
T

HINK YOU

know all about Jake "The Snake" Roberts and his exploits? Find out by taking the Jake the Snake Trivia Quiz.

There are five categories of questions, followed by a special Tough Stuff category. The first five categories are for your entertainment only. There are five questions in each, for a total of 25. Award yourself a point for every correct answer. Anything over 20 is great; over 15, not bad.

The final category, Tough Stuff, will really test you. That's why we're asking readers to send in their answers to the five questions. The correct answers will be published in the next issue of *WWF Wrestling Spotlight*, along with the names of the first five readers who come up with all the answers. They'll receive a free membership to the 1990 WWF Fan Club.



SNAKES ALIVE

- 1 Jake's pet, Damian, is what kind of snake?
- 2 What is Jake's wife's first name?
- 3 Jake's favorite quote: "It's _____ for you, my man."
- 4 Where does Jake hail from?
- 5 Is Jake pictured on a WWF ice cream bar?

SNAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

- 6 With which self-proclaimed rock 'n' roller did Jake tangle at *WrestleMania III*?
- 7 Jake actually started the feud with his *WrestleMania III* opponent by making fun of his what?
- 8 What rock star, known for his work with snakes, was in Jake's corner at *WrestleMania III*?
- 9 As Roberts was about to apply the winning DDT in that bout, he was tripped by whom?
- 10 What other breach of the rules led to Jake's defeat at *WrestleMania III*?

RUDE A-SNAKENING

- 11 Jake was one of how many wrestlers who took part in the championship elimination tournament at *WrestleMania IV*?
- 12 Was his opponent from the previous *WrestleMania* also involved in the tournament?
- 13 What long-time rival did Jake meet in the tournament's first round?
- 14 What was the result of the bout?
- 15 As a consequence, what became of Jake and his opponent?

SNAKEBIT

- 16 What behemoth did Jake face at *WrestleMania V*?
- 17 His *WrestleMania V* opponent had previously shown he had a phobia for what?
- 18 Who was the guest official for the bout?
- 19 Who made off with Jake's snake during the course of the match?
- 20 Who was awarded the bout (on a disqualification)?

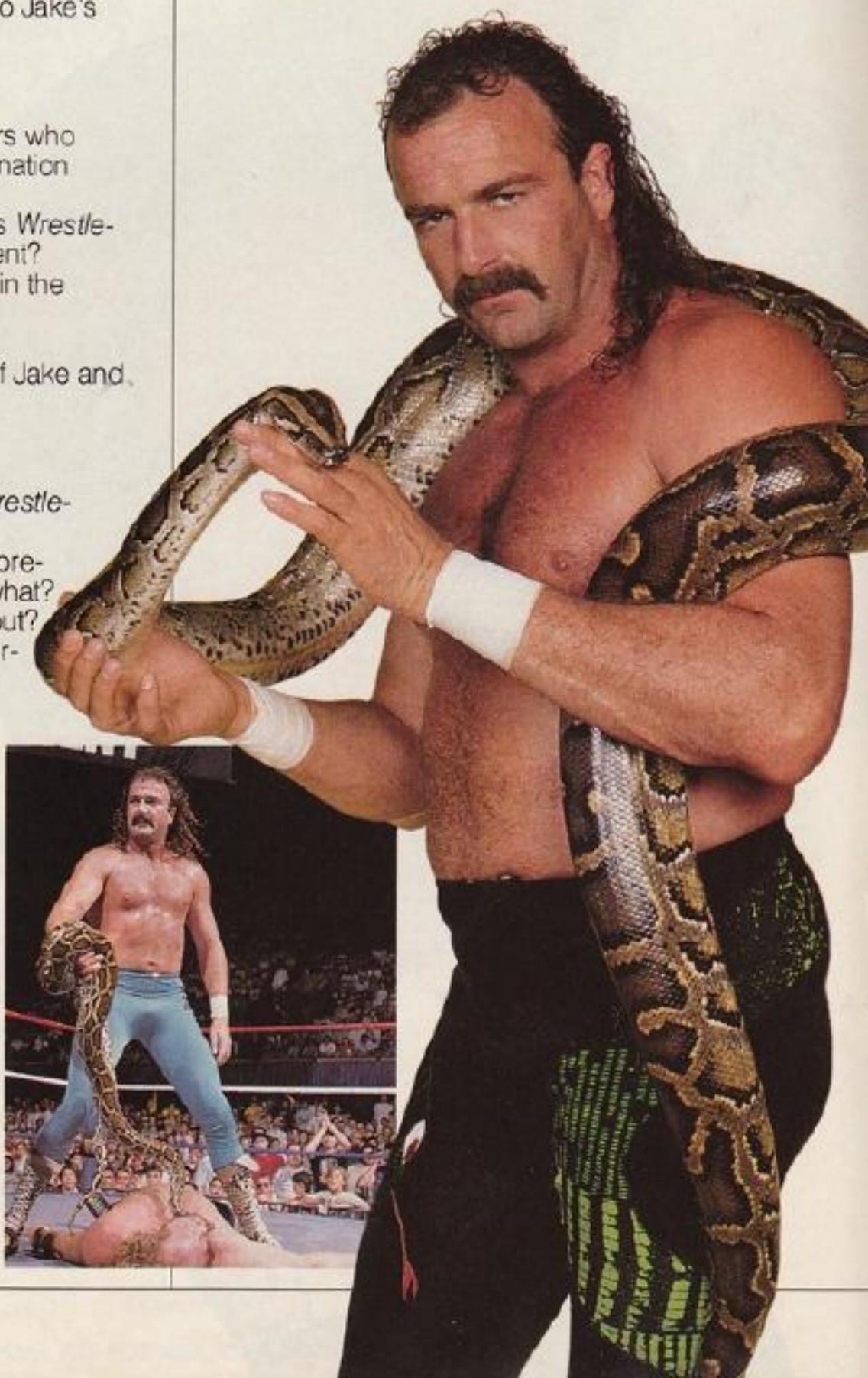
SNAKING ALL OVER

- 21 Jake teamed up with Hulk Hogan and what twosome at the most recent *Survivor Series*?
- 22 Who captained the opposing team?
- 23 Jake co-captained a team in the previous *Survivor Series*. Who joined him as captain?
- 24 In the 1989 *Royal Rumble*, who eliminated himself after catching sight of Jake's snake?
- 25 Jake wasn't on the card for the last *SummerSlam*, but he did take part in the 1988 event. Whom did he meet in that *SummerSlam*?

TOUGH STUFF

(Send answers to *WWF Magazine*, Box 3859, Stamford, CT 06905. Postcards only, please.)

- a) What 1988 month was Jake featured on the cover of *WWF Magazine*?
- b) Who claims to have the X-rays of Jake's injured neck hanging up in the playroom of his winter home?
- c) Jake and Jim Duggan were pictured playing what sport in the October 1988 issue of *WWF Magazine*?
- d) Among Jake's favorite snakes is one that doesn't have any poison and that tries to save its skin by rolling over and playing dead when threatened. What kind of snake is that?
- e) In the WWF Superstars playing cards advertised in *WWF Magazine*, Jake is pictured on what card?



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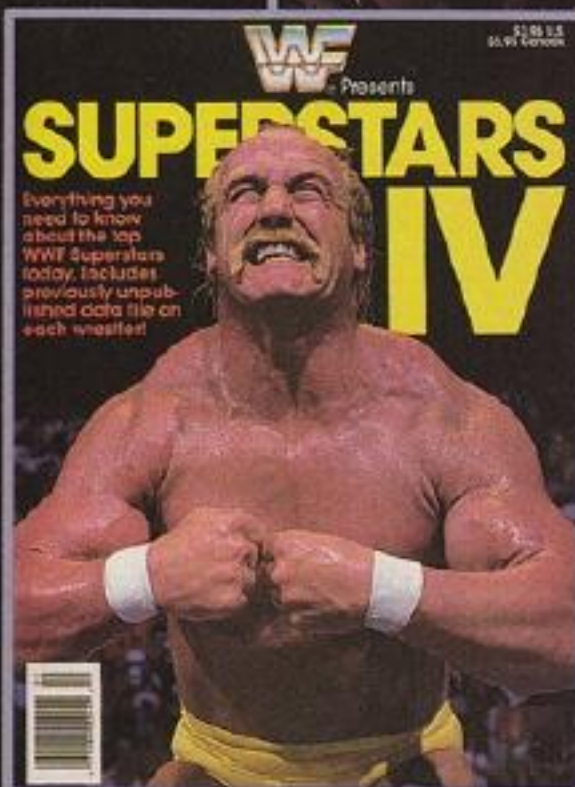
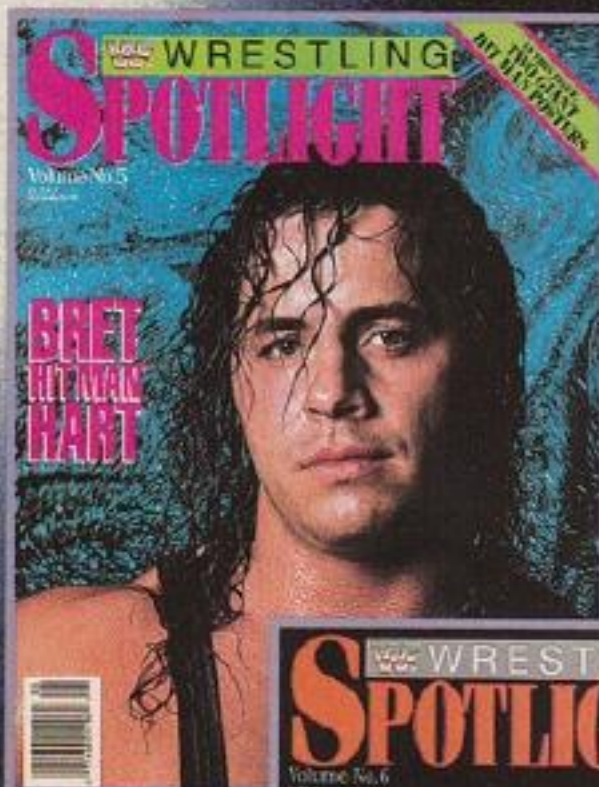
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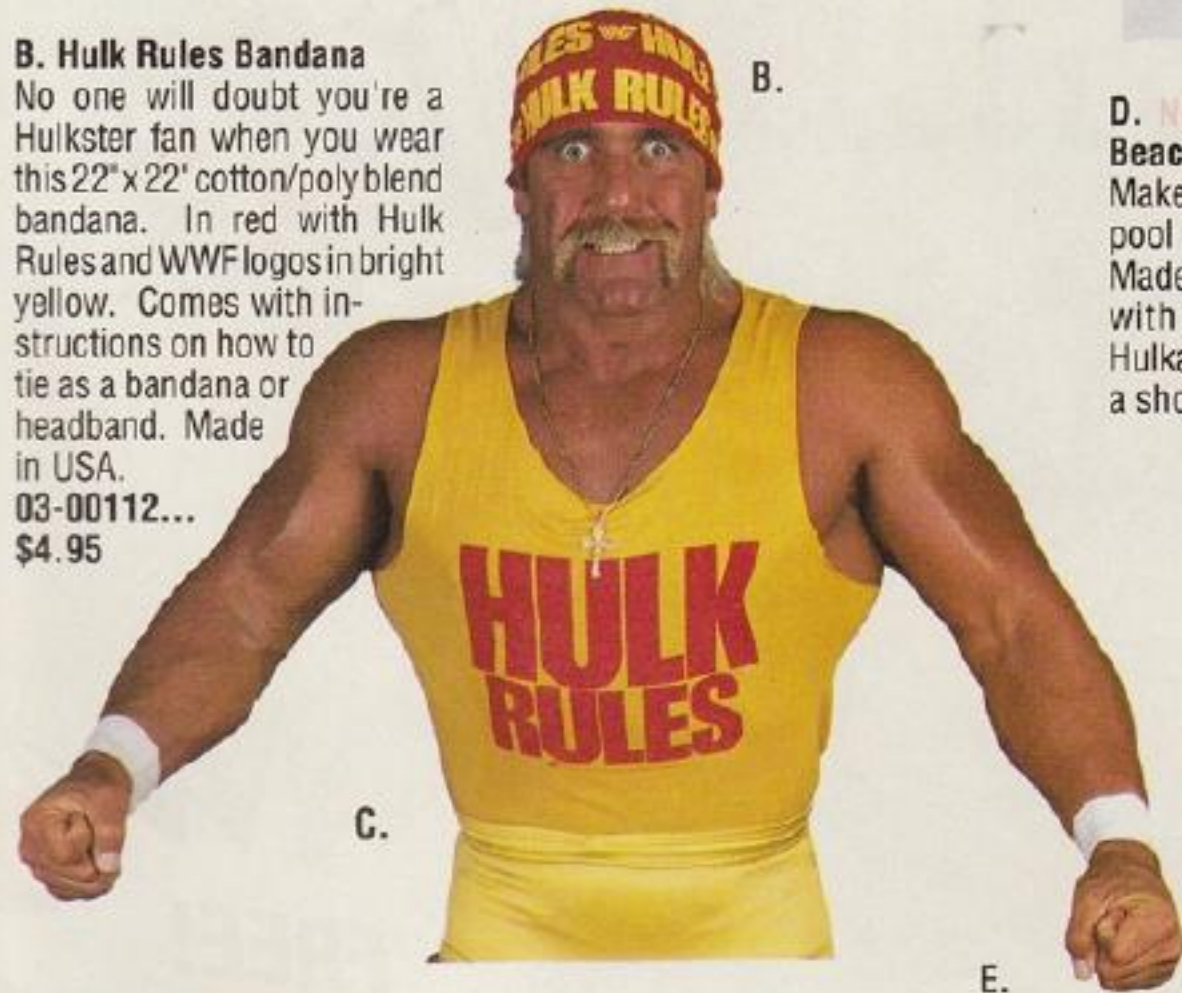
Hulk Hogan will protect your car's interior from the sun's harmful rays with the Hulk Rules car shade. Made in the USA of heavy-duty corrugated board, 20 1/2" x 52", designed to fit the contour of most windshields. Reverses to become a road emergency/hazard sign. Folds for easy storage.

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B. Hulk Rules Bandana

No one will doubt you're a Hulkster fan when you wear this 22" x 22" cotton/poly blend bandana. In red with Hulk Rules and WWF logos in bright yellow. Comes with instructions on how to tie as a bandana or headband. Made in USA.

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C. Hulk Rules T-Shirt

Styled just as Hulk wears his T-shirts, with sleeves and back cut by hand. Made in USA of 50/50 cotton/poly blend in yellow with a bold red logo that will let everyone know Hulk Rules.

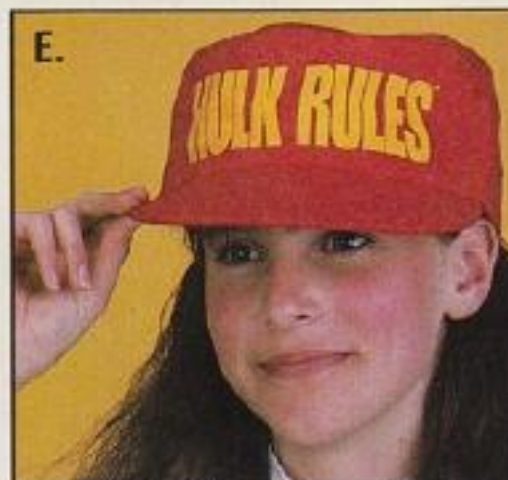
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D. NEW! Hulk Rules Beach Towel

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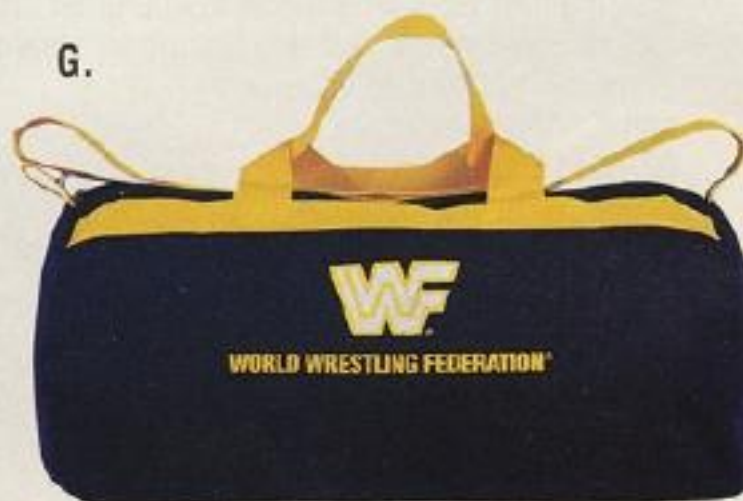


F. NEW! Million Dollar Man Bank

Save your money, and someday you may become a Million Dollar Man! This 4 3/4" x 6" bank features Ted DiBiase's face on a replica of a \$100 bill. Easy lift-off slotted plastic cap. American made.

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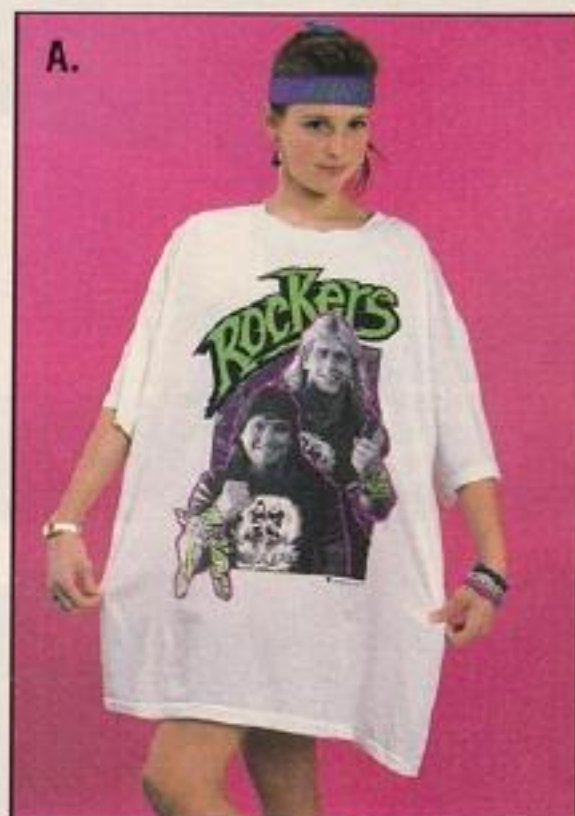
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G. WWF All-Purpose Sports Bag

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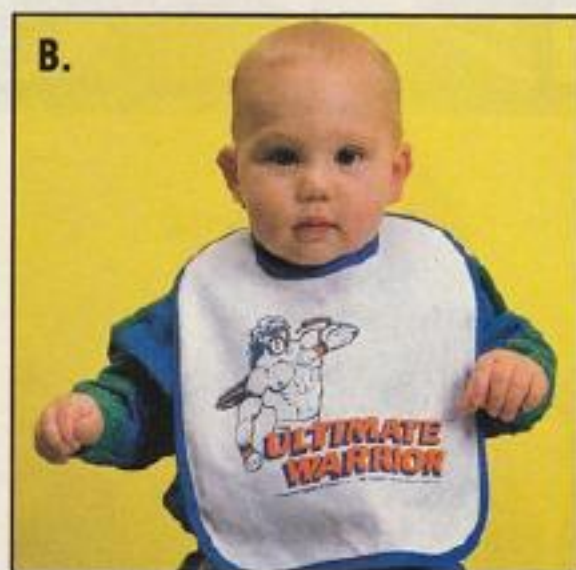


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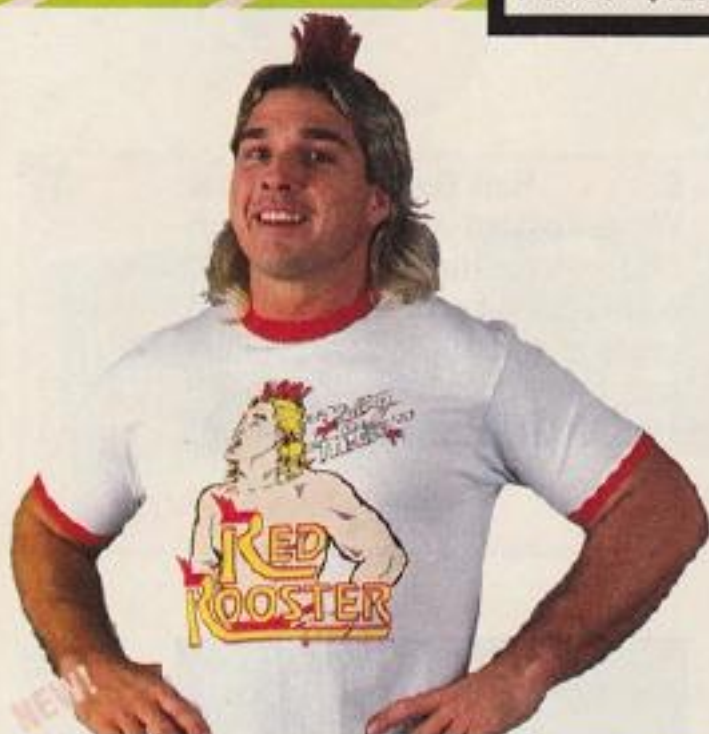
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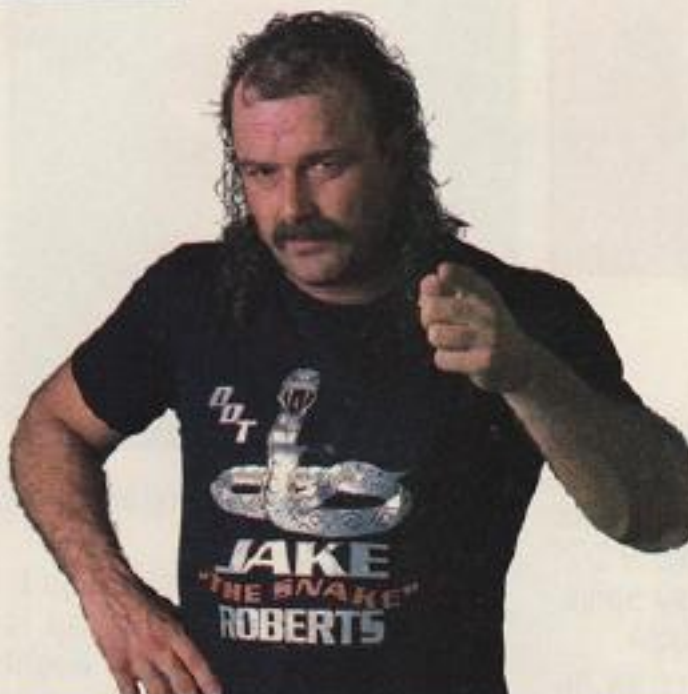
Hulk Hogan

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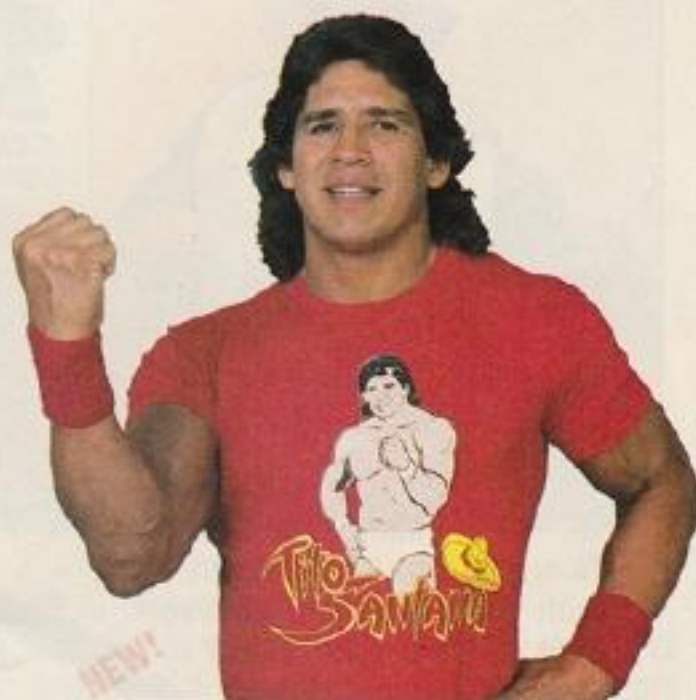
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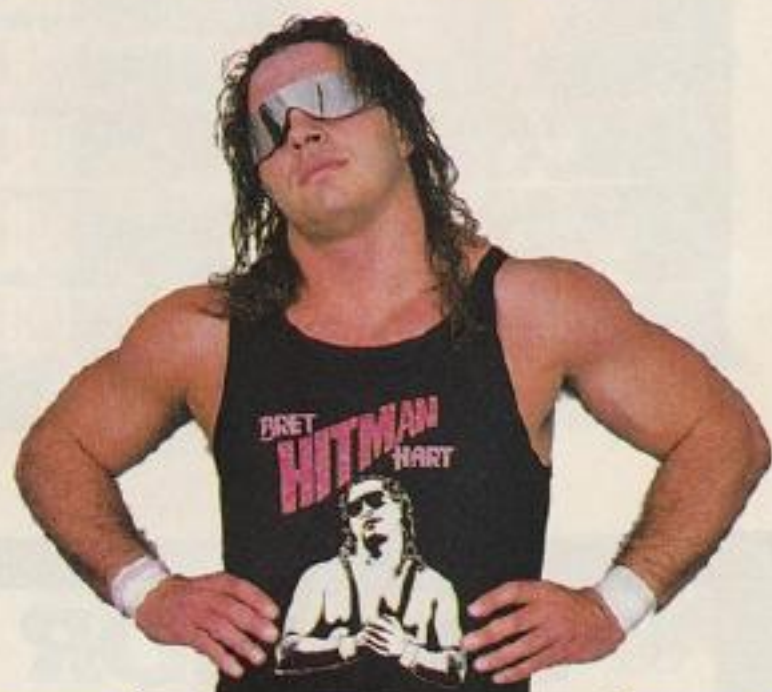
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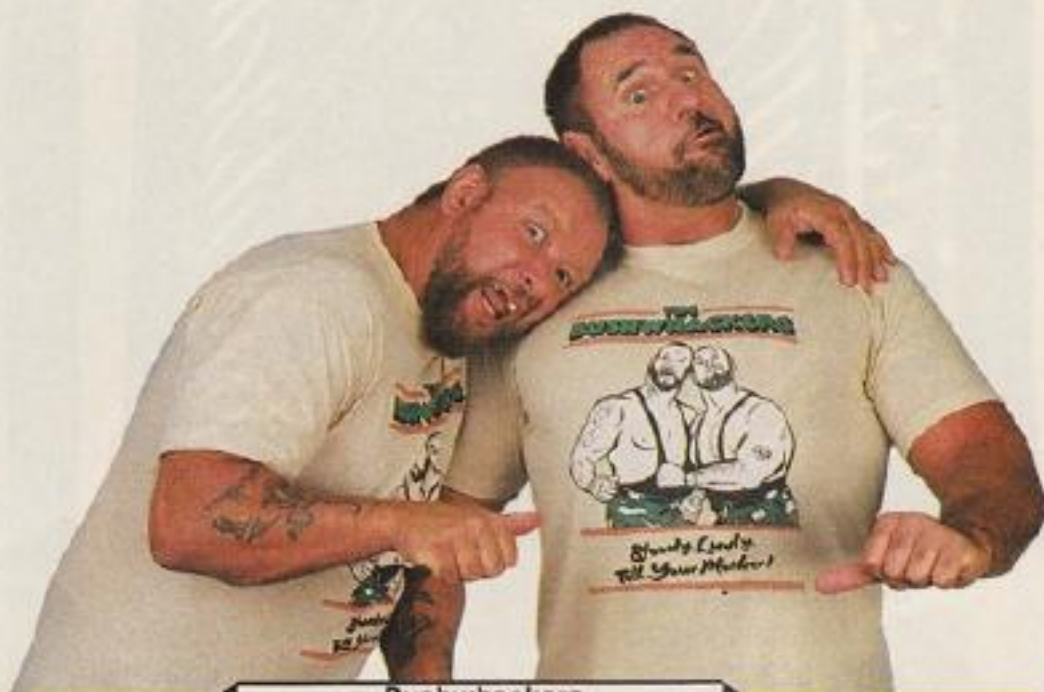
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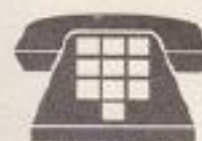
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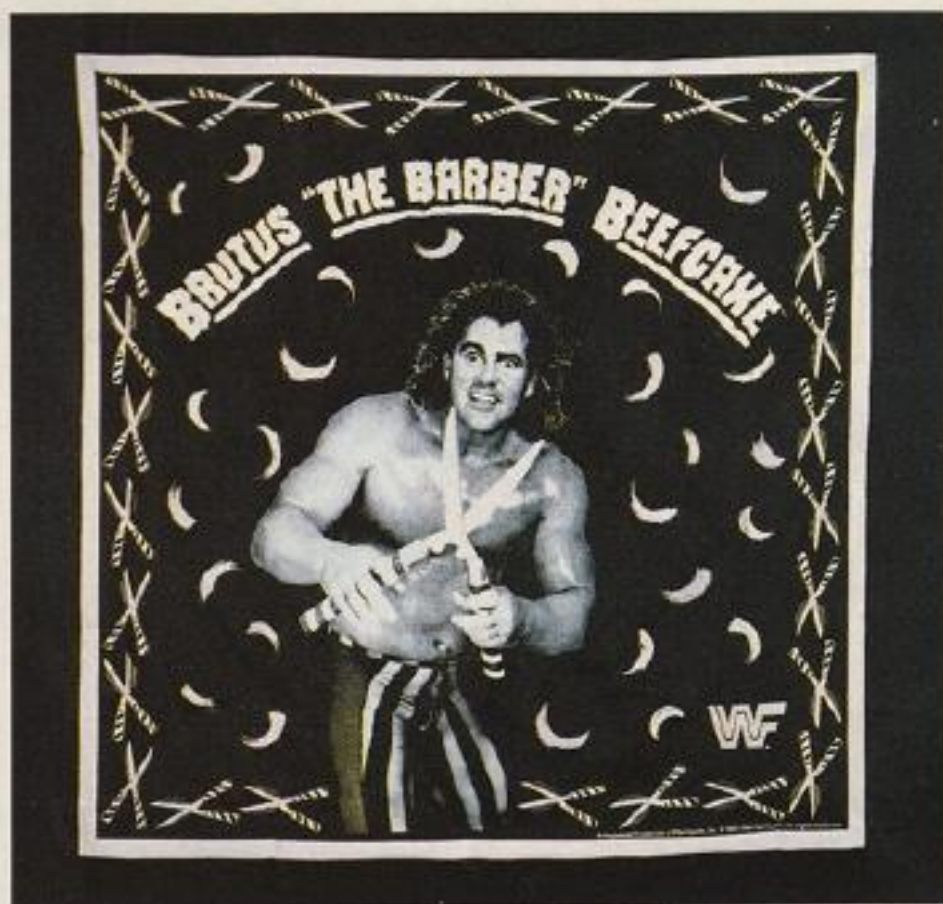


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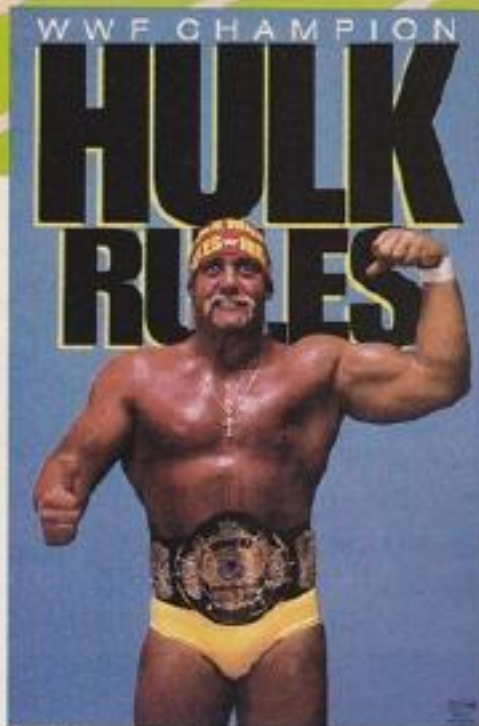


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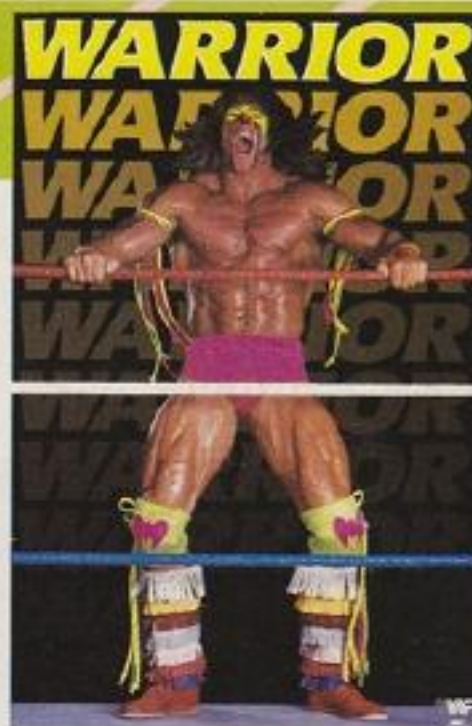
Hulk Hogan

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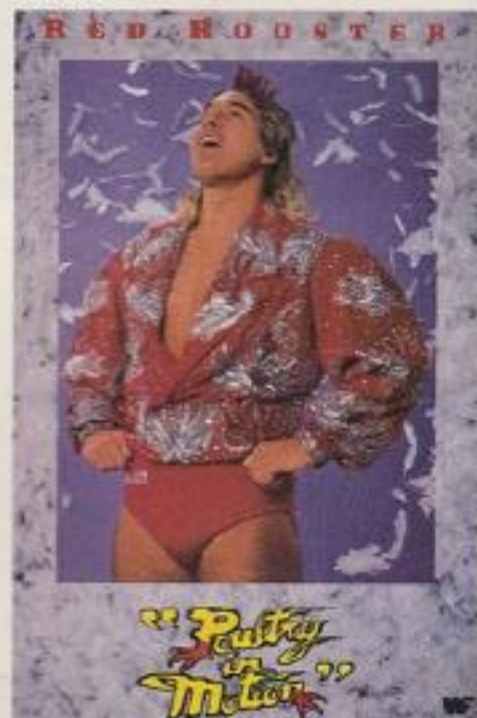
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Hulk Workout

10-00158

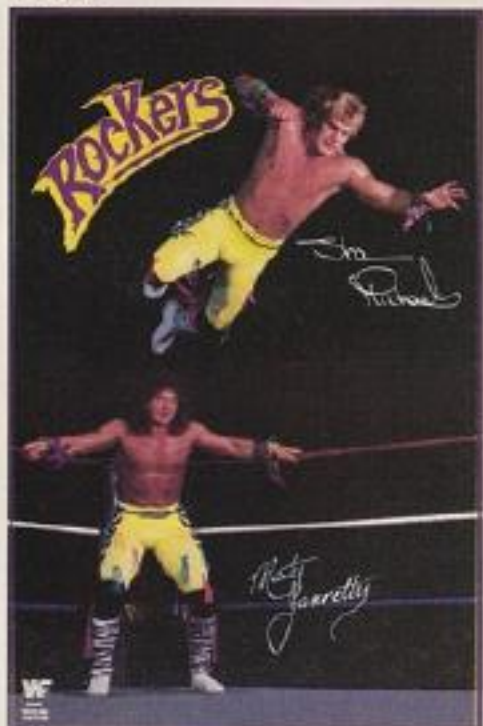
NEW!



Red Rooster

10-00160

NEW!



Rockers

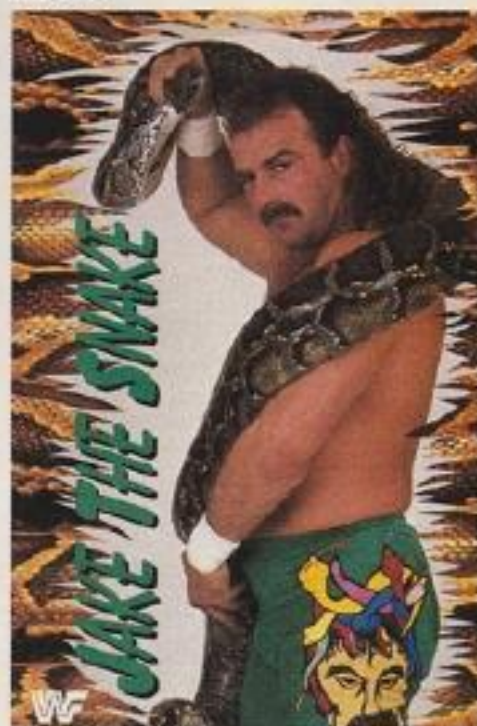
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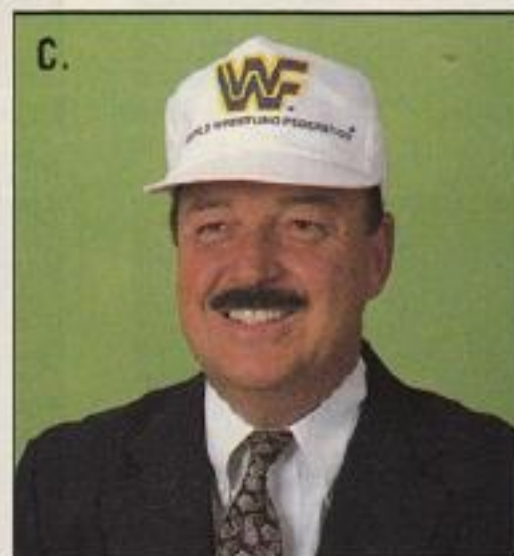
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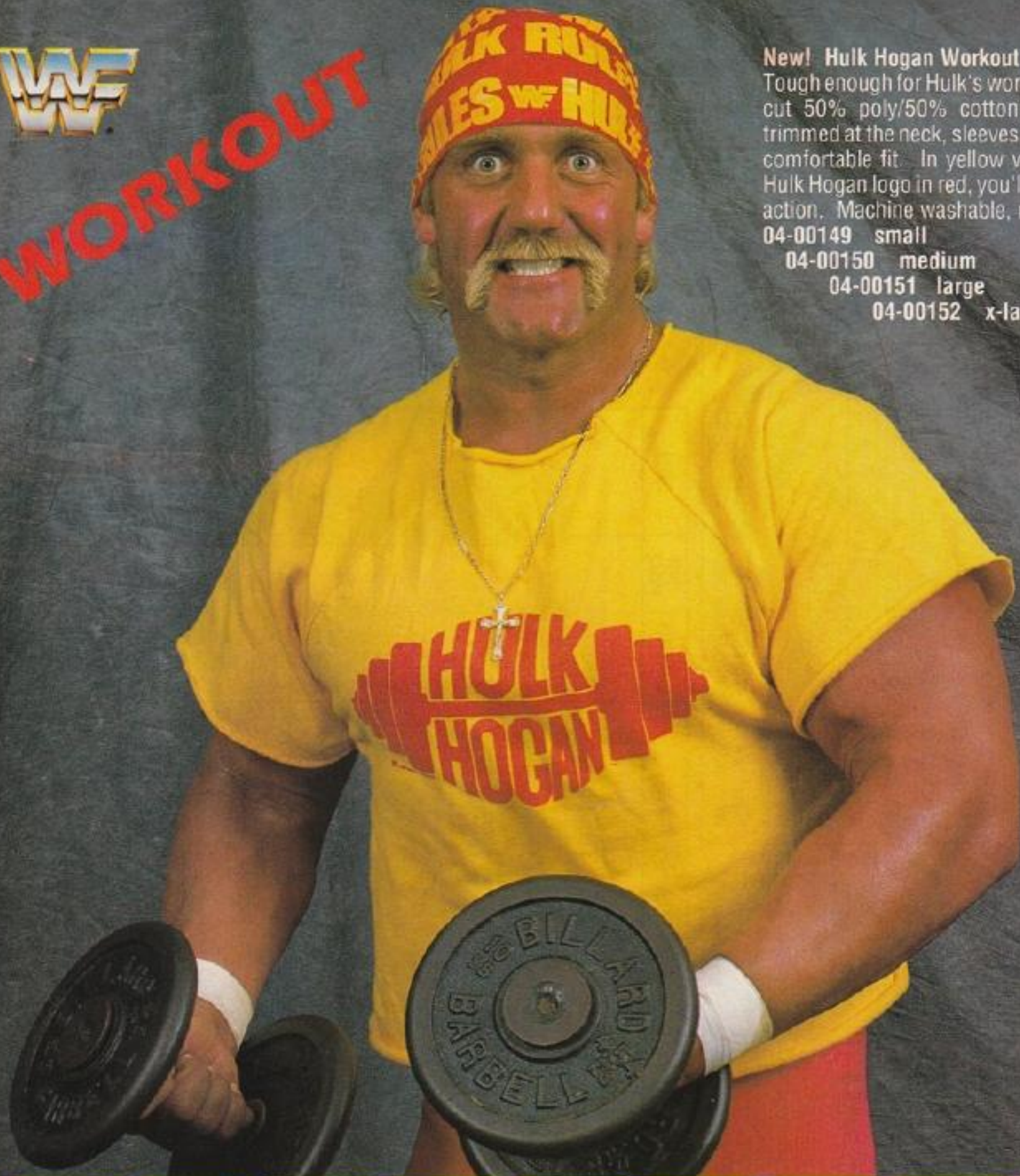
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**WORLD WRESTLING
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Forces That Rule The Snake

Part 1

by Keith Elliot Greenberg

Roberts Surveys His Prey

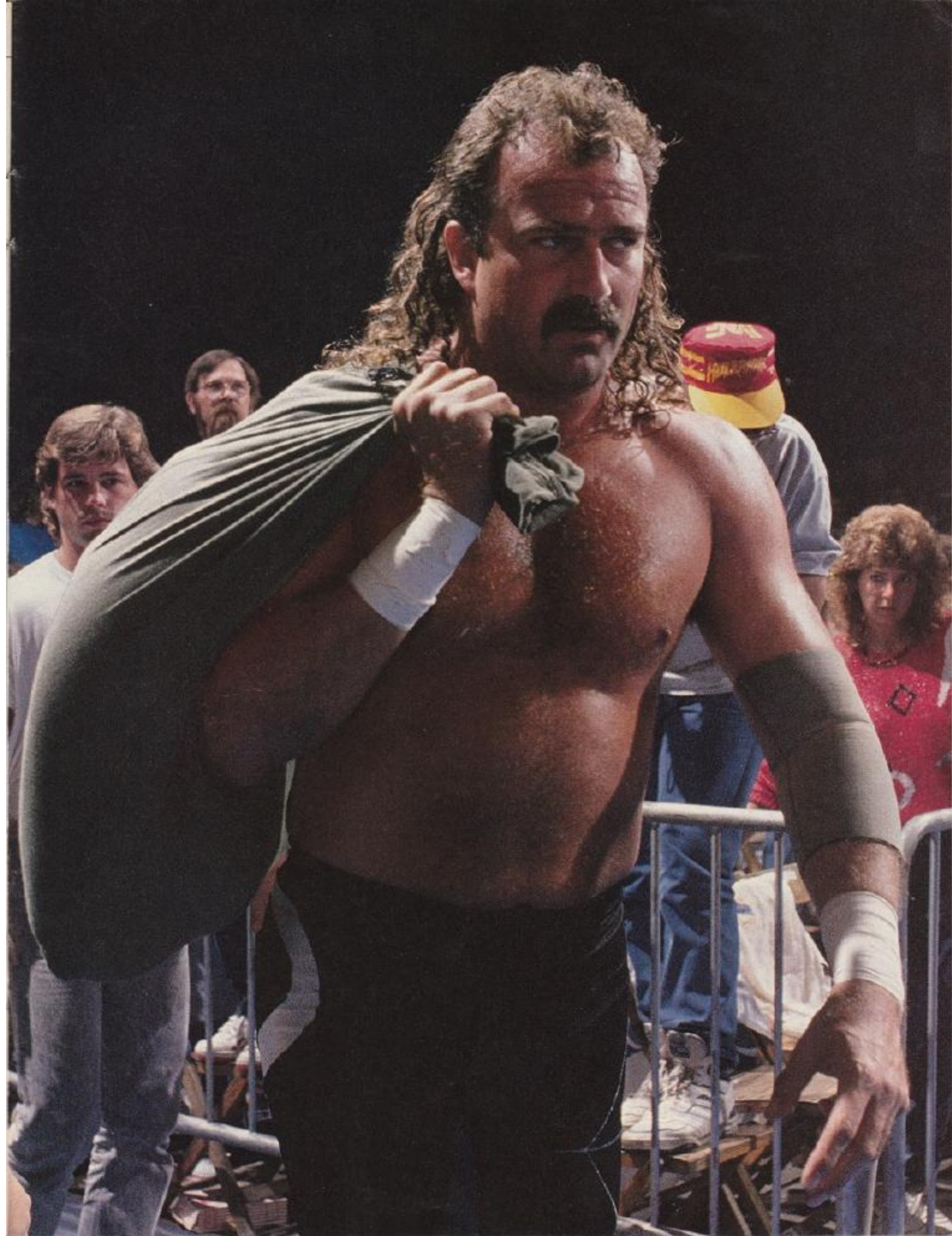
EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this issue of WWF Wrestling Spotlight, we have tried hard to present an in-depth profile of Jake "The Snake" Roberts. Because he is so enigmatic, we assigned different writers to interview him on two key aspects of his multi-faceted personality. One interview tried to get at exactly what makes Jake tick. The other attempted to explore Jake's outlook on the world and how he relates to it. However, typical of Jake, his answers to our questions only raised more questions, but that's the way it always will be with the man who thinks like a serpent.

His mind could be the most complex in wrestling. His intentions are never fully clear—always shrouded in a deliberate haze of smoke. His words frighten and silence his listeners. In the ring, he is a psychological tactician as much as a vicious warrior—driven by forces known to only Jake "The Snake" Roberts.

"People ask me, 'What drives Jake "The Snake" Roberts?' as if there's a pure and simple answer to that," the wrestler states. "Jake 'The Snake' Roberts, you see, is anything but pure and simple. When I'm at my sharpest in the ring, or when I'm at war with the demons of my sleep, different

Always unpredictable, Jake "The Snake" Roberts is perhaps the most complex wrestler in the World Wrestling Federation, and he's capable of twisting people's minds with his carefully thought-out battle plans.



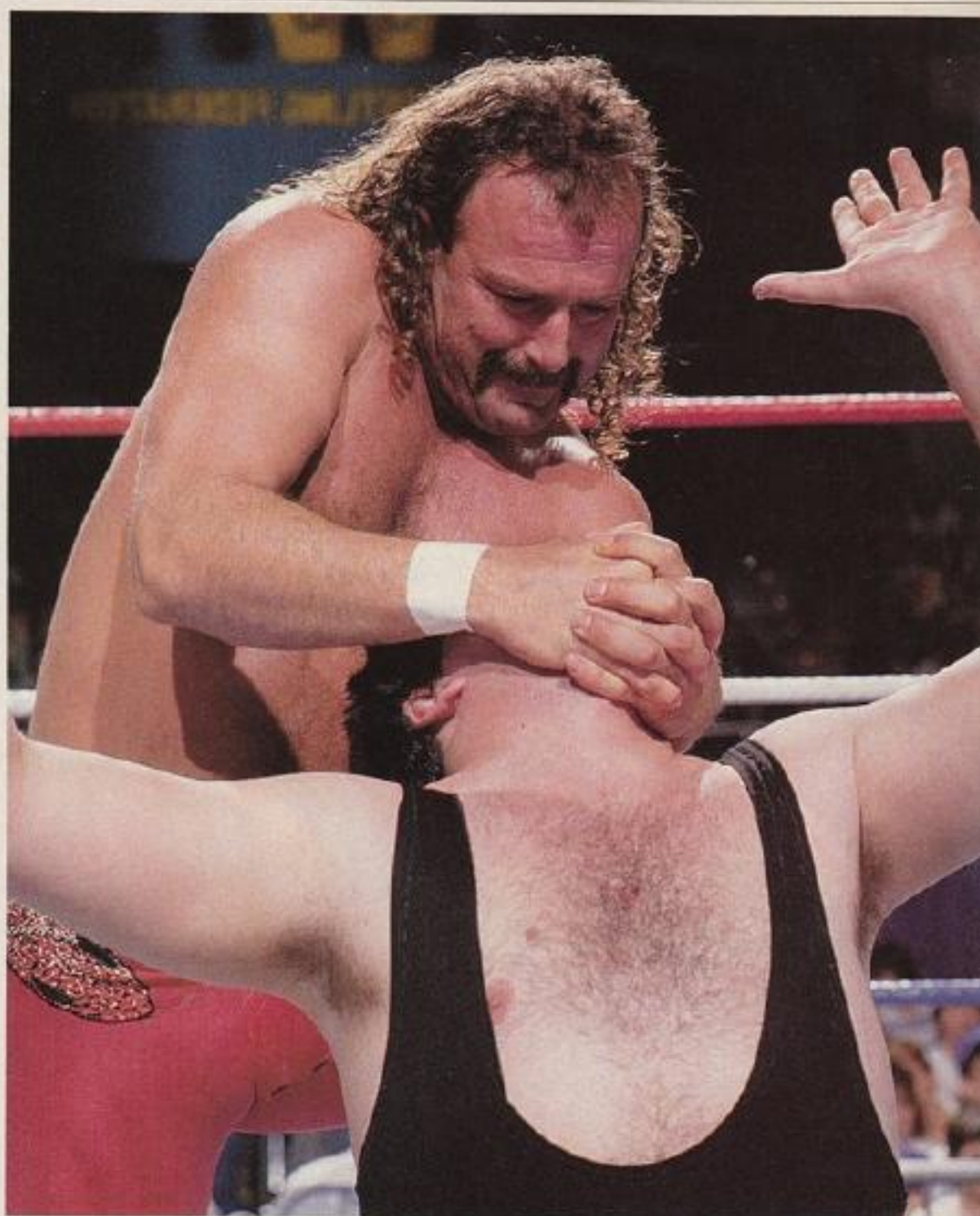


forces are battling for possession of my soul. Some of those forces are friends, some of them are enemies, and some are caught in that horrible limbo in between. The struggle of those forces is the struggle of Jake 'The Snake' Roberts. Whether it's in the arena or in my mind, there is always a fight."

The most obvious force in Jake's life is the snake. The wrestler never goes anywhere without his python, Damian. He leaves the snake in a corner of the ring while he wrestles and then dumps it on opponents after victory. Like Roberts, the snake is a distrusting creature, flicking its forked tongue in and out to test the surroundings before making a move.

"In its own primitive way, the snake has the common sense of a back-alley street fighter," Jake says. "The snake knows how cruel the world can be and doesn't move forward unless it knows what's waiting ahead. That's a level of perfection a civilized being has trouble living up to. We're raised to be naive in some ways, believing that the guy right next to you has your best interests at heart. In the World Wrestling Federation, though, you learn that isn't true. Everybody wants a piece of you, and only the strong and the smart make it. Without a snake's instinct, you'd be crushed like an insect on the kitchen floor."

Another snakelike attribute of

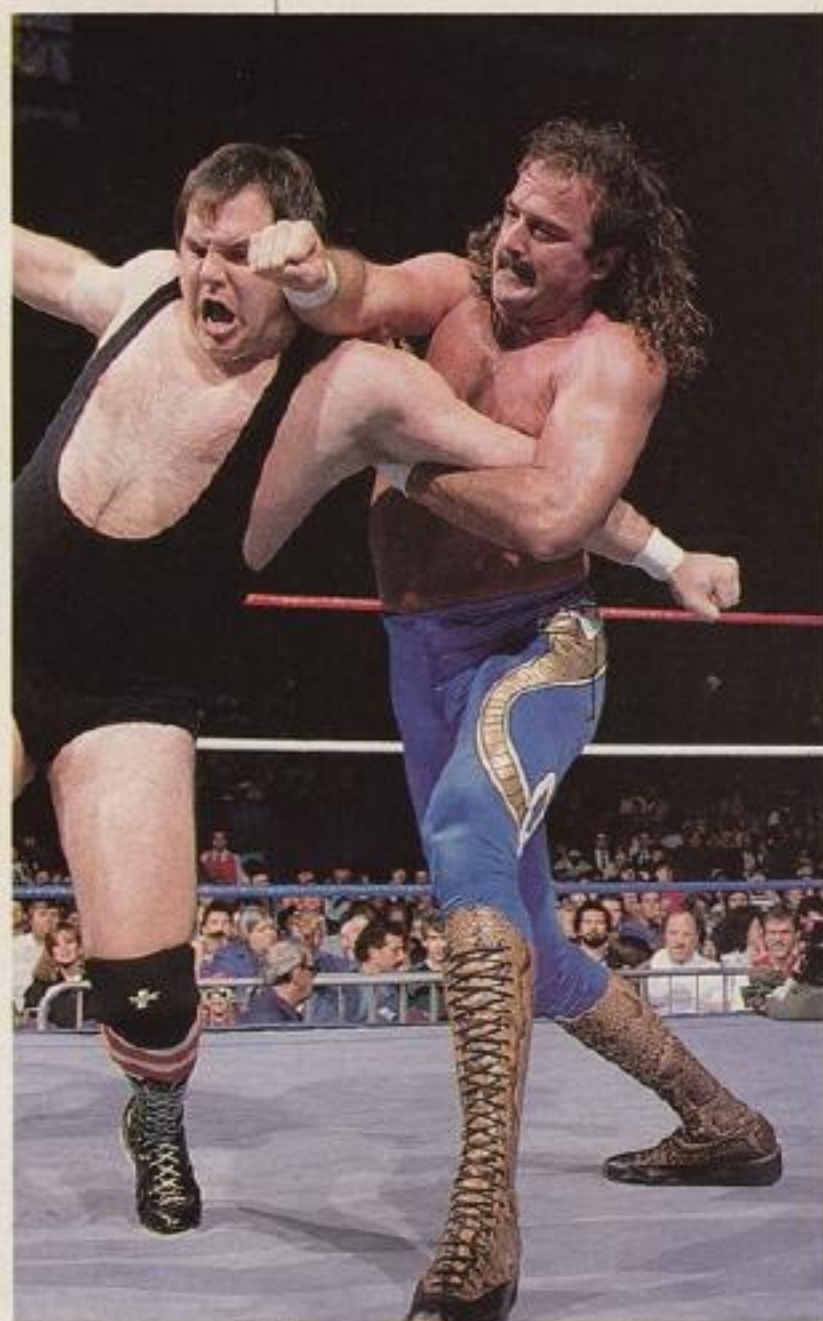
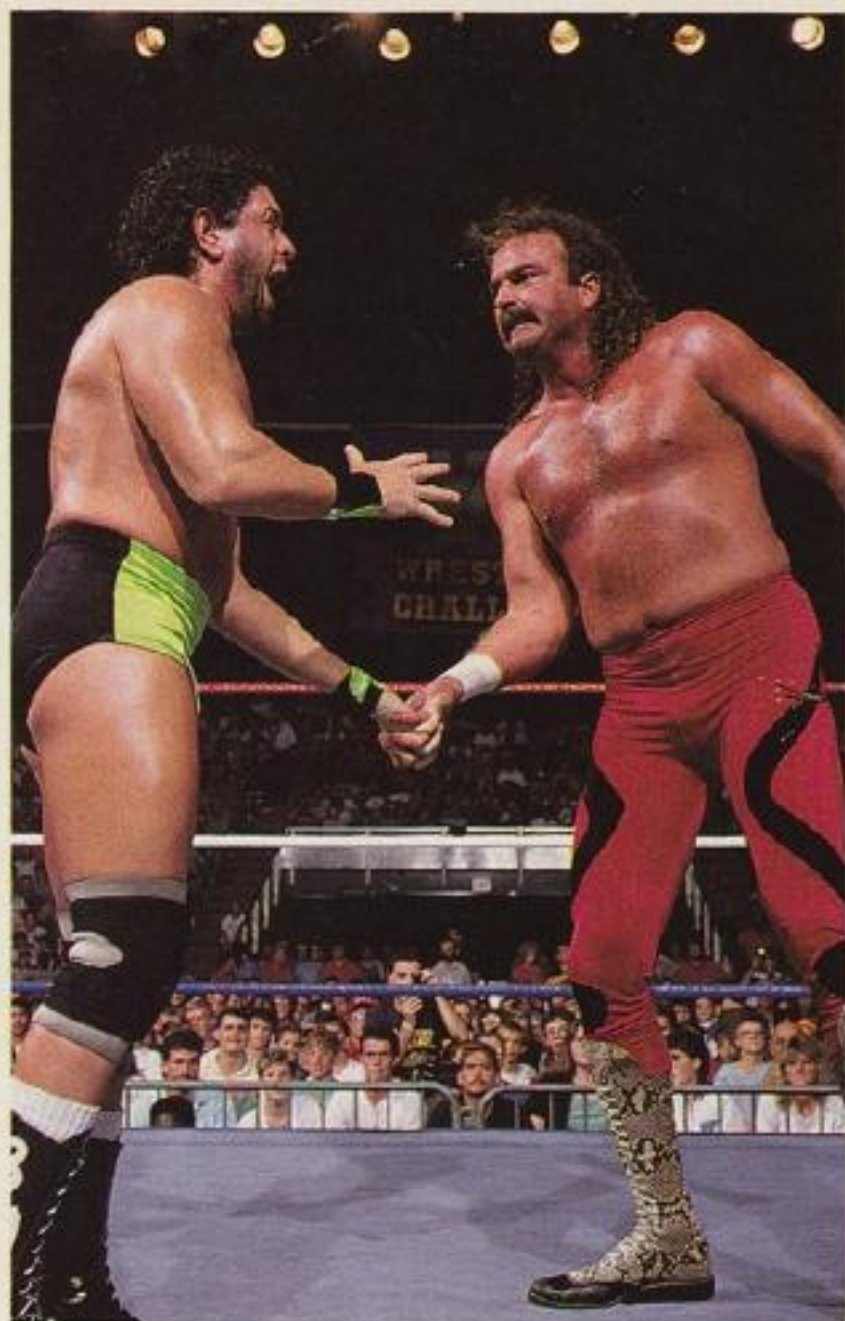


Roberts is his willingness to take on larger prey. "If a snake goes against a large mammal, the snake comes out ahead," Jake explains. "Why does that happen? I think it has something to do with the element of surprise. The mammal doesn't expect the snake's jaws to open up and swallow it alive, but that's exactly what the snake does. If you've kept track of my history in the World Wrestling Federation, you've seen me toe-to-toe with big guys like Akeem and Andre the Giant. And it's been the force of the snake in Jake 'The Snake' Roberts that has led me through those very hard battles."

Occasionally, the rage in Roberts has also aided him. He talks about rage often, since it is

an element in nearly every wrestling match. He claims that rage can be a plus when channeled properly, but when a competitor is overcome with anger, Jake says, he is an easy target for defeat.

"Rage. It's boiling in me now as I speak to you. It's inside every gladiator and never leaves. The challenge is to harness it. Ted DiBiase, when you injured my neck, you set off a rage I never felt before. I came close when Rick Rude showed disrespect to my wife, but never to that degree. All those days I was lying in the hospital, rage fired me to a fast recovery. Then I let it pulse through my body in the ring, as I lashed out at you, Million Dollar Man." He smiles slightly. "Ted DiBiase, I know that you fully un-



derstand how painful Jake Roberts' rage can be.

"But, then, I understand how some wrestlers can become obsessed with rage. You set off a fuse, and they spin out of control. Maybe you slap them on a break or make a remark about their hair. They just lose it. When that happens, I hardly even break a sweat. I just use the other man's rage to gain a victory."

In the world of wrestling, lust is a term that takes on its own meaning. Each wrestler comes to the ring with some feeling of lust, not for romance, but for glory. For Roberts, lust for combat is what initially drove him into wrestling.

"I remember standing in an arena before I made my professional debut. I was looking at the two men in the ring and tingling with the electricity their battle generated. And I lusted. I lusted to step through the ropes and hear

the fans screaming their brains out, to lock up with another man and power him to the mat with brute strength, to feel the horror and the thrill of a dog fight, and to look out at the wild crowd when my hand was raised in victory."

However, coupled with the desire to fight is fear—of injury, of defeat, of humiliation. Very few wrestlers acknowledge fear, hoping to psych out their adversaries with a confident facade. Roberts believes that fear is constructive if it puts a competitor in better touch with his inner self.

"I'm man enough to admit to fear," he says. "When I consider the forces churning inside me, sometimes I worry about the outcome. Will the forces I dread most take me over? It's knowing about that fear that gives you the strength to handle it. I also know what I fear in the ring. I don't want to lose, and I don't want to get hurt.

The forces that dictate Jake's life resemble those of a serpent. Roberts can strike a foe's limbs, then the neck and then again the limbs, making his strategy almost impossible to figure out.

With that simple awareness, I can develop a defensive strategy."

The force Jake values most is truth. "It's hard to see through the many veils of life," he states. "There are deceptive signs that can lead you to your doom. After a while, everything seems to be a game of mirrors. You don't know what's real and what's a scam.

"But when I put my DDT on an opponent, there's no illusion about it. The man is mine, and he's going down. After the DDT, I cover him for the pin, and I'm a winner. To me, the entire match is a fight for the truth that is victory. Whenever I realize that truth, life can't be any sweeter." **WF**

Forces That Rule The Snake

Part 2

by Lou Gianfriddo

The World Through Snake Eyes

ALWAYS CALCULATING and deceptive, Jake "The Snake" Roberts is one of the toughest athletes to figure out because he can beat an opponent in a variety of ways. Beyond the squared circle, Jake is also a difficult man to understand.

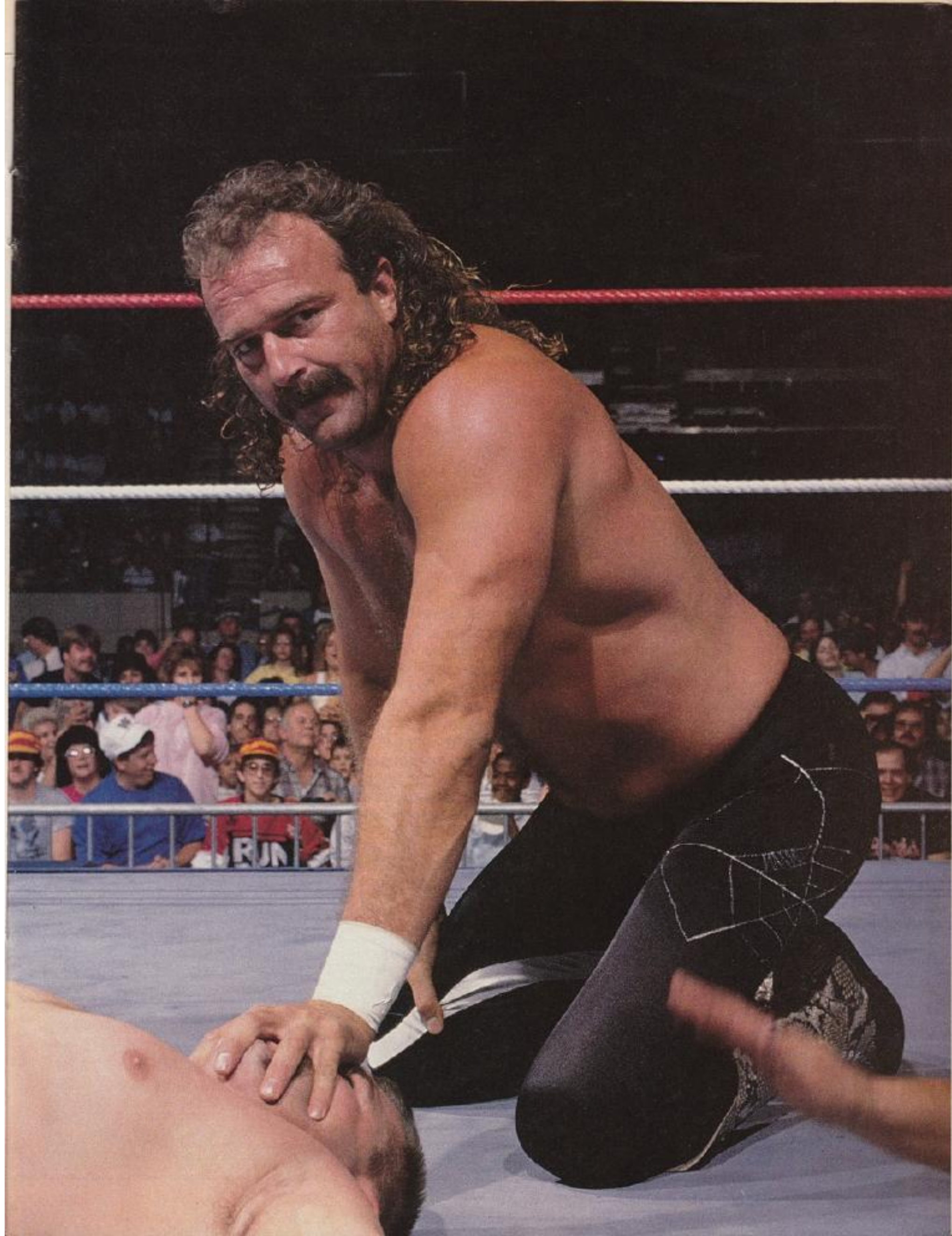
As a loner, the Snake does things his way and relies on no one to help him. Over the years, his ability and raw guts have been his only allies, and according to him, that's all he needs to survive in the rough-and-tumble world of the WWF.

"I never needed any help from anyone," Roberts whispers, putting his hands across his mustache. "And if anybody ever offered it, I'd refuse it. It's that simple. In life, my man, you're all alone. Sure, you have your acquaintances, but only for a brief time on this ride called life. In the ring, it's no different. I mean, honestly, if you're in there and you're gettin' your tail kicked every which way but loose, you can't call on a friend to bail you out; you bail yourself out! And that's been my only creed ever since I came—no, slithered—into the World Wrestling Federation."

Faithfully, the Snake has lived by his creed. Never backing down from anyone, Roberts has always welcomed tough challenges. In the WWF, he contends, there are plenty of them to go around.

On that note, when asked about the World Wrestling

After knocking the stuffings out of an unlucky competitor with his famed DDT, the Snake, eyes fixed into the far distance, covers his spent foe for the three-count.



Federation and what he sees in it, Roberts has this response: "In the WWF, you're talking about mega-athletes," the Snake hisses. "You have guys out there who can rip your head off just like that, and there's no two ways about it. You have guys who'll jump you in a parking lot, rough you up and then go out for pizza. And then you have guys like me..."

"See, I'm the kind of guy you don't get in front of if I'm driving a car," Jake goes on after a momentary pause. "I can't help that—it's just the way I am. I'm cruel but fair. When you cross me, I'm cruel; when you get in my way, you're fair game."

Many wrestlers have crossed Jake's path, and most of them have ended up in defeat. In this issue of *Spotlight*, we have detailed the Snake's most memorable matches and how he fared in them. Now, we'll find out, in his words, what he thinks of his opponents, starting with the Million Dollar Man Ted DiBiase.

"Simple as this, my man," Roberts begins, as he puts the bag with Damian in it across his lap. "I just don't like Ted DiBiase or the man he pretends to be. For a while, he put a damper on my wrestling career. But when I came back, I put a big damper on his ego. Out of all my opponents, he is one that I would love to abuse again and again."

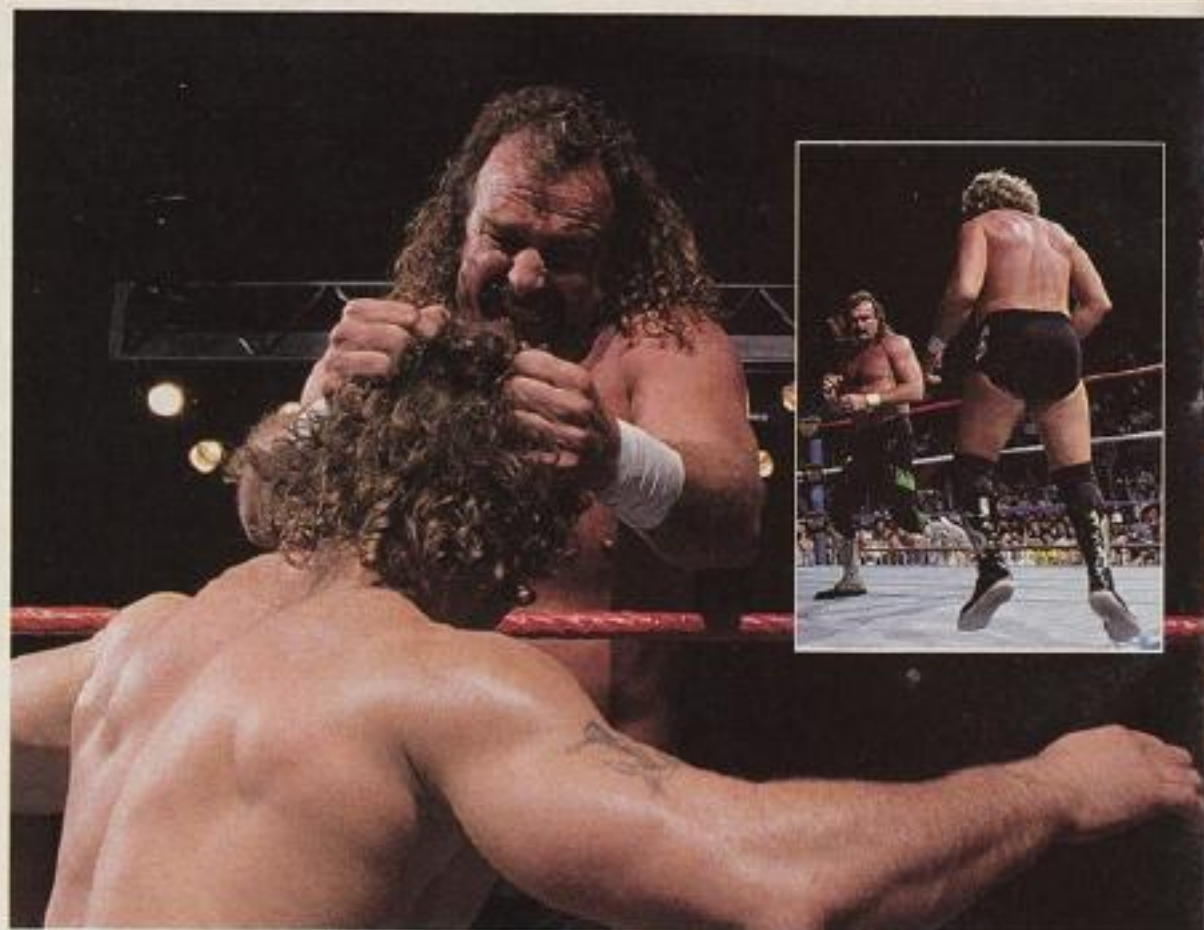
When Andre the Giant is brought up, Jake has this to say: "The man has unbelievable power, and I'm lucky to have survived."

As far as former Intercontinental Champion Ravishing Rick Rude goes, Jake Roberts isn't too conversational.

"That's *personal*! No comment."

However, when the Honky Tonk Man is mentioned, the Snake has much to say, mostly about their *WrestleMania III* confrontation.

"Ah, the Honky Tonk Man," Jake starts off, with a slight smile of reminiscence. "The Rhythm behind the Blues, and I was his first big hit. At *WrestleMania III*, I rang Honky's bell. Damian did well, too. I know Damian would just



love another piece of Jimmy Hart."

Perhaps Damian might also enjoy a small tidbit of Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat, who once warred with Jake. Reflecting to that era, here's what Roberts remembers of the Dragon: "The man was a machine when it came to basic wrestling," confesses the Snake. "But I'm not your basic wrestler, and Ricky Steamboat discovered that. He discovered that a Snake is more cunning, more dangerous and more to handle than a Dragon."

Likewise, the Snake was too much for former football player

George Wells to handle. Wells was Jake's *WrestleMania 2* adversary.

"George Wells?" Jake wonders, arching his eyebrows. "Where is he now?"

"Of all the opponents that I've faced," the Snake says, "the one who worries me the most is the one I see in the mirror every day. I ask myself, 'Will I ever change?' Well, to anyone who wants to test the Snake, that's the only prayer they have. Now to me, that's very, very scary, my man. But very real. Right, Damian?"

As you probably observed,

Answers To Jake Trivia Quiz On Page 16

The answers to questions 1 through 25 are as follows: **SNAKES ALIVE** 1) a python, 2) Cheryl, 3) snake eyes, 4) Stone Mountain, Georgia, 5) yes. **SNAKE, RATTLE and ROLL** 6) the Honky Tonk Man, 7) his singing, 8) Alice Cooper, 9) Jimmy Hart, 10) Honky grabbed the ropes while pinning Jake. **RUDE A-SNAKENING** 11) 14, 12) no, he and Brutus Beefcake met for the Intercontinental Title, 13) Ravishing Rick Rude, 14) a draw, 15) both wrestlers were eliminated. **SNAKEBIT** 16) Andre the Giant, 17) snakes, 18) Big John Studd, 19) Ted DiBiase, 20) Jake the Snake. **SNAKING ALL OVER** 21) Ax and Smash of Demolition, 22) DiBiase, 23) Jim Duggan, 24) Andre, 25) Hercules.

Answers To Demolition Trivia Tough Stuff

TOUGH STUFF answers: a) Joey Marella, b) March, c) Rick Derringer, d) Mr. Fuji, e) Freddy Kruger.

Winners of Spotlight Vol. 6 Tough Stuff

Troy Ferguson, Topeka, Kansas; Sam Gusway, Duncan, British Columbia, Canada; Kevin Lee Beard, Pittsburg, California; David Vrabel, Crown Point, Indiana; Neil Devanna, Dover, New Hampshire.



Rick Rude turned out to be one of Jake's most hated adversaries, as did the Million Dollar Man. Both these superstars feared Jake's DDT and the python, Damian, that Roberts likes to call his "reality check" and, sometimes, his "family member."

Damian has been a major part of Roberts' life for quite some time. On numerous occasions, this enormous python has slithered over many of the WWF's superstars. Virtually everyone who has come in contact with this scaly reptile has been scared stiff.

One would wonder what is his real relationship with the python? What goes on behind the scenes? Only the Snake can answer these questions.

"To me, Damian is a reality check," admits Jake. "It's a healthy relationship because any time I start thinking that I'm too smart for this or that, I look at the snake, and I see how basic he is. I realize that he's a true survivor. They've been around since the beginning of time, and they'll be around long after man disappears

from the face of this green earth.

"That's what I like about Damian," he continues, caressing the serpent's head. "And I treat Damian like family because Damian has always been there for me."

So has the DDT. Of all the moves in wrestling, the DDT is, by far, one of the most devastating ever invented. The Snake has perfected this explosive tactic, and it has helped him stay head and shoulders above many athletes in the WWF. How did Jake actually develop this crushing maneuver that has left so many wrestlers disabled?

"Through trial and error," he answers, as he puts Damian back into the bag. "and the errors were far and few between. With the DDT, I've got myself a weapon for which there's no defense. I mean, it's like having a machine gun when the rest of the world has rocks. Another thing about the DDT. It's snakelike in its design and venomous in its results. In one word, the DDT simply means 'victory.'"

That it does. Whenever he applies the DDT, Jake has himself a

guaranteed win. This move, says Jake, will continue to propel him higher and higher in the WWF rankings as the weeks and months go by. With all of the triumphs that he's accumulated over the years, where does Jake the Snake go from here?

"To the top!" Roberts asserts. "But I have my own way of getting there. You see, I look at my past a lot because the past is what molds the present and builds the future. For anybody to know where Jake the Snake's heading, they first must know where I've been. I came into this world a complete innocent. I didn't know how to lie, cheat, choose, make a decision or anything else until I was taught..."

"We've all made mistakes in the game of life," the Snake says. "The lesson is not to make the same mistake twice. So far, I've made no mistakes. What does that tell you? Yeah, I'm thinking the same thing you are: I mean, after all, I am the one that your mother always warned you about. And she was right." **WF**

Venomous Moves

by Keith Elliot Greenberg

A Look At Jake's Most Lethal Ring Weapons

J

AKE "THE SNAKE"

Roberts is one competitor whose personality is so intense that his ring abilities are frequently overshadowed by it. However, like his character, which becomes more complicated the more it is examined, Roberts' wrestling skills run deep. To the average mat watcher, he is renowned as a dangerous combatant. But the wealth of his grappling knowledge is too often lost in the aura emanated by this python-wielding mystic.

If you listen to Jake, the deception is deliberate—part of some master plan that only he understands. "There are many rings to the being of Jake 'The Snake' Roberts," he says, "and you can't cut through those rings quickly. An exploration of each ring is a long, painstaking process, and while you're overwhelmed by the length of each trek, Jake the Snake is plotting ahead. So don't look down for a second 'cause I'm a patient man, and I wait for that fleeting instance when my opponent lowers his eyes from the job at hand. That's the time when the Snake strikes—as fast and poisonous as a king cobra."

The way Jake raises one eyebrow and crooks his mouth to the side when he speaks always leaves companions uneasy. While his words shroud you, his mind is drifting elsewhere. One begins to wonder which of Roberts' statements

Like a rattler, Jake "The Snake" Roberts can strike his opponents in a host of different ways, yielding venomous results. Ravishing Rick Rude knows this well.



are sincere and which are a cunning ruse. In everyday life, as in the ring, the Snake's motive is to finish you off. When conversing, he accomplishes his mission with mazy, troubling thoughts. Between the ropes, Roberts relies on the deadly DDT.

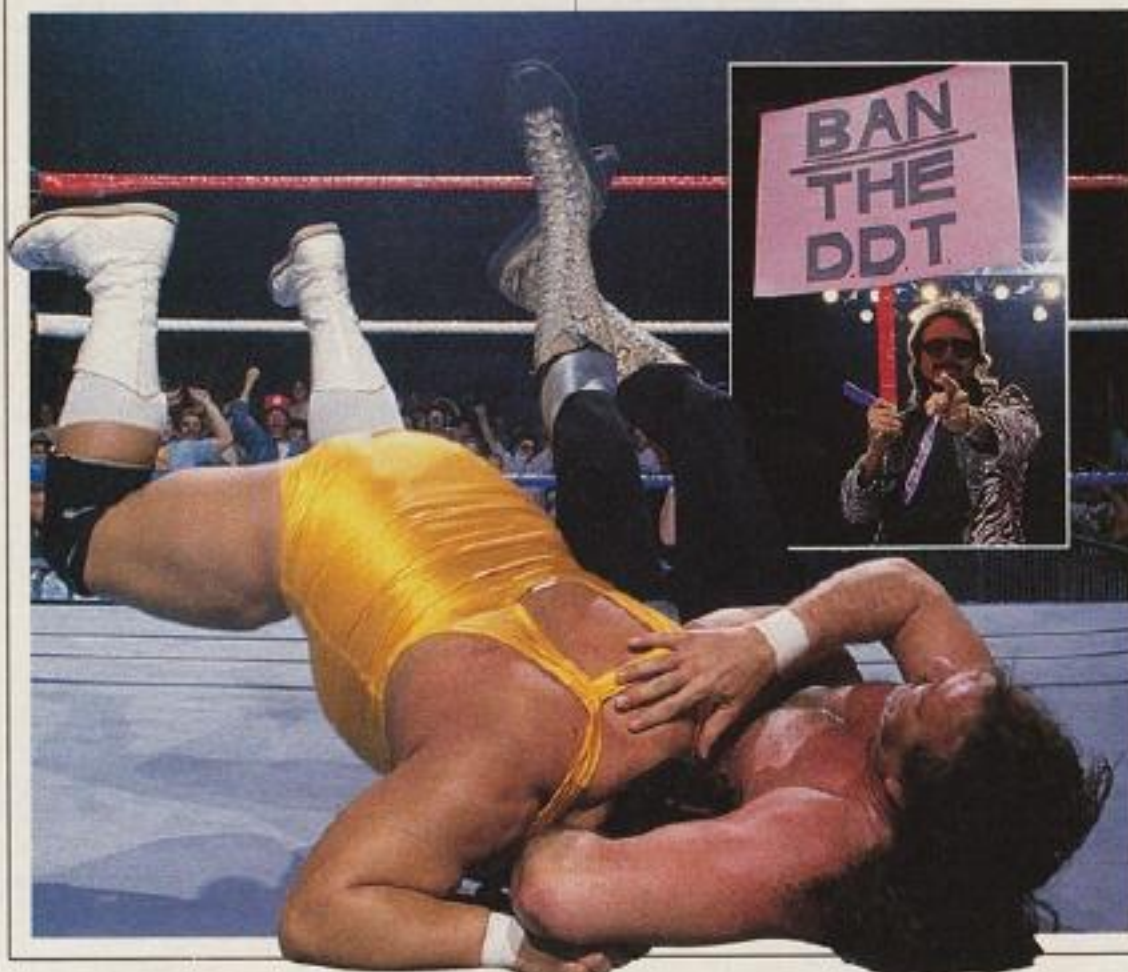
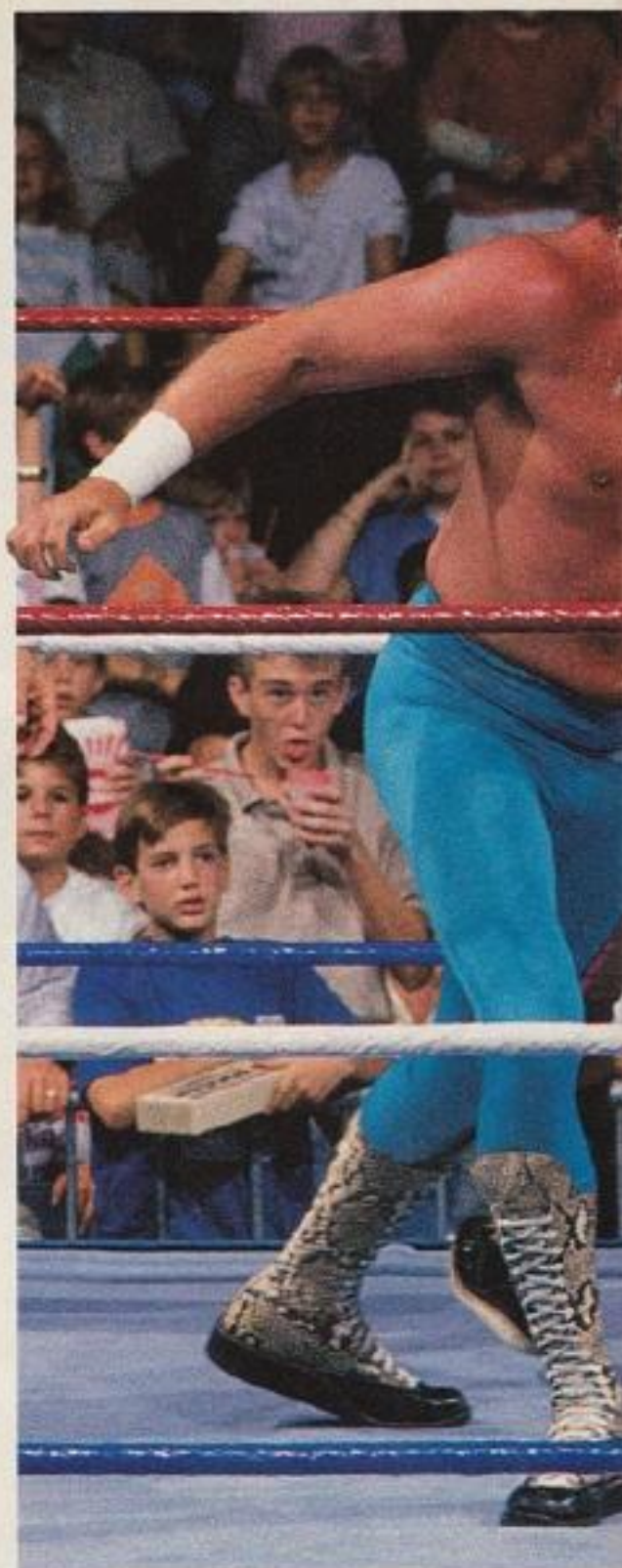
"People ask me, 'What is the



DDT?" Jake says. "You know, I can't answer that question because there's too much gray area there; it's not simple. It's like asking a person, 'What is existence?' or 'What is passion?' The DDT is like fire because it's so helpful and so perilous. When I'm in a match, the DDT is survival; but to my enemies, the DDT is the end-all."

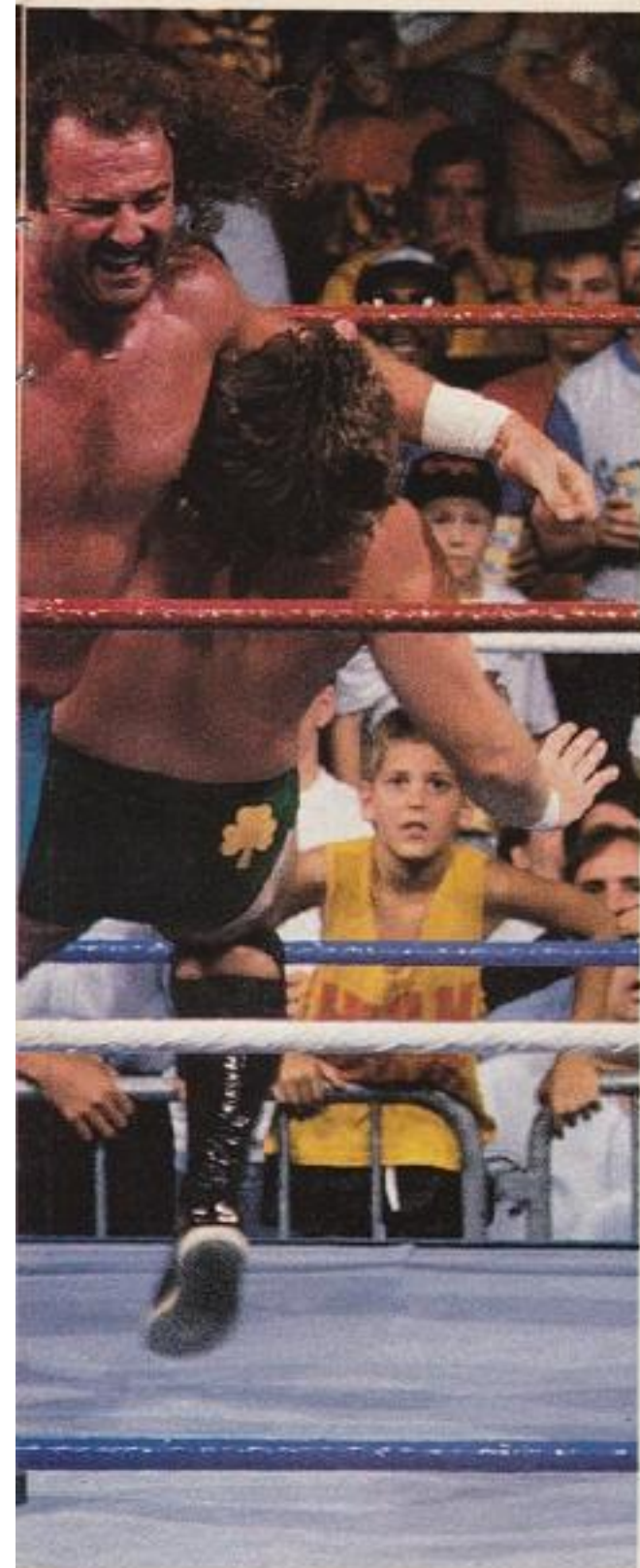
To the fans in the arena, the DDT seems relatively simple to apply. However, if Roberts' opponent is not weakened, the move can backfire. When delivering the maneuver, Jake leaves most of his body unprotected, opening himself up to a vicious counterattack by a foe still maintaining the fighting spirit. Therefore, in order for the DDT to be successful, Jake must depend on his mat sense—acquired over years in the squared circle—to know whether his adversary will be unable to block the move.

"It's kind of a vibe you get," Jake explains. "And as the days and years pass, the vibe comes more and more from the crowd. It seems that the people in the arena become one great body, feeling the savagery of the match and communicating to me when my opponent is ready for the DDT."



Even as I apply the move, I'm relying on the impulses of the crowd to surge through my body, bringing the match to a definitive conclusion."

The DDT often comes after a foe has been floored, and Jake forces him to his feet, bends him forward and grips him—with the left arm—around the neck. Then comes the stage where crowd interaction is critical. Roberts looks into the stands, hearing the fans' rising voices and cheers of encouragement. Fueled by his supporters, he grits his teeth. With face grim, he fires himself up further by thrusting his right arm in the air and revolving it over his



head. This can take two seconds to six seconds. The Snake proceeds to the next step only when he feels the timing is right. In a flash, he falls to the mat on his shoulder blades, driving his rival's bent head into the canvas and setting him up for the three-count.

Virtually no wrestler can weather the DDT, and Jake's opponents have occasionally called for the banning of the maneuver. The most memorable campaign in this direction came from the Honky Tonk Man and his manager, Colonel Jimmy Hart. For a period, Honky condemned the DDT in every interview, and Hart even came to ringside with a sign

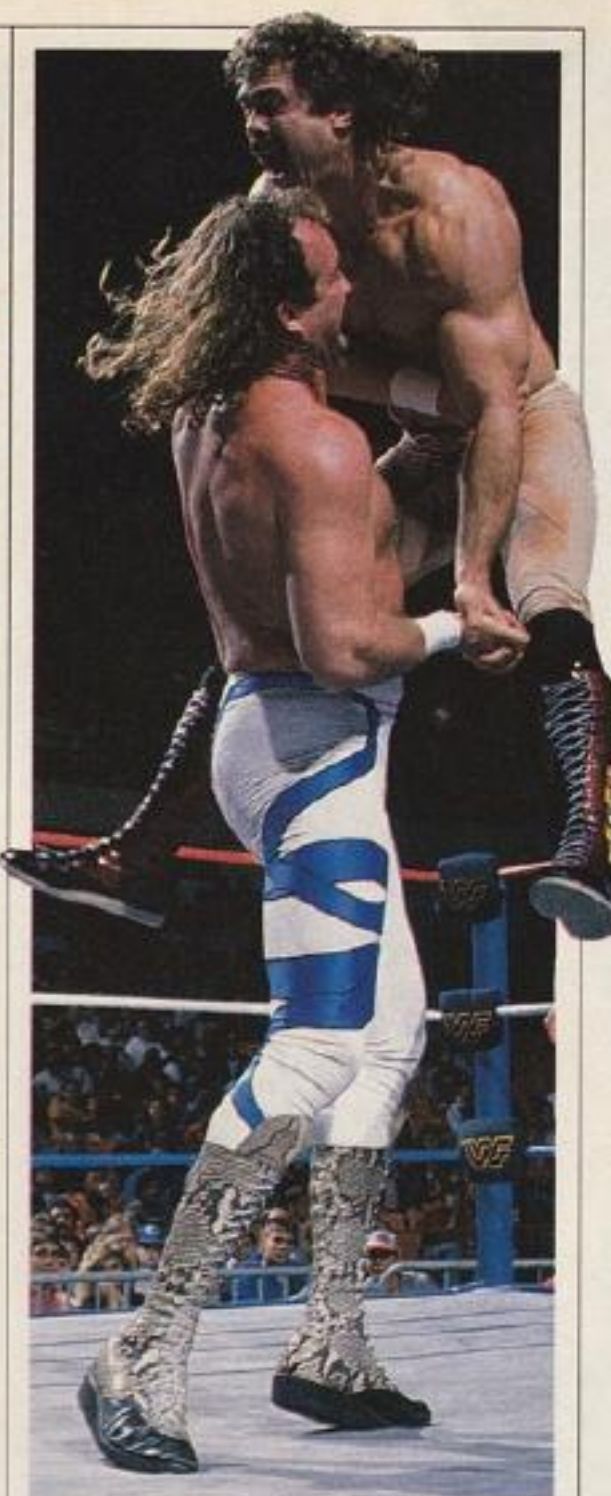


Jake sets up for his punishing DDT and then applies it. Over the years, managers such as Jimmy "Mouth of the South" Hart have made attempts to ban the DDT, and none have worked. Along with the DDT, Roberts also masters the short-arm clothesline as well as several versions of the wristlock.

declaring, "Ban the DDT!" The duo was hoping to cultivate fan support with these gestures, but aficionados stuck with Roberts and urged him to continue using his patented finisher.

Although he never wrestles any two matches in the same fashion, Jake has exhibited a tendency to prepare his foes for the DDT by first delivering a short-armed clothesline. When executed by a bulky grappler like Big Boss Man or Canadian Earthquake, a standard clothesline is brutal enough to defeat its victim. The more slender Roberts has made his clothesline just as brutal by whipping his rival into it. Normally, the Snake will hold his adversary in some variation of a wristlock, then sling him backward—as if to ricochet him off the ropes—and arch him forward into an extended arm. By administering the clothesline at such close range, Jake may do more damage than his heavier colleagues, who do not hold onto their opponents when utilizing the maneuver.

In many instances, Roberts will use a more standardized clothes-



line, but even then, he turns it into a high-speed tactic. When a foe has been knocked to the arena floor, for example, and struggles onto the ring apron, the Snake will charge and blast his victim back to the ringside area with a clothesline.

He uses similar momentum in his shoulderblock, first rebounding off the ropes before slicing down his foe with the move. The velocity gained by employing the ring cables this way increases the shoulderblock's impact, and Jake favors delivering the tactic two or three times in a row to take the wind—and the fight—out of his opponent.

Despite Roberts' lanky appearance, his incredible strength is evident in one move sometimes ignored by the typical fan. Because

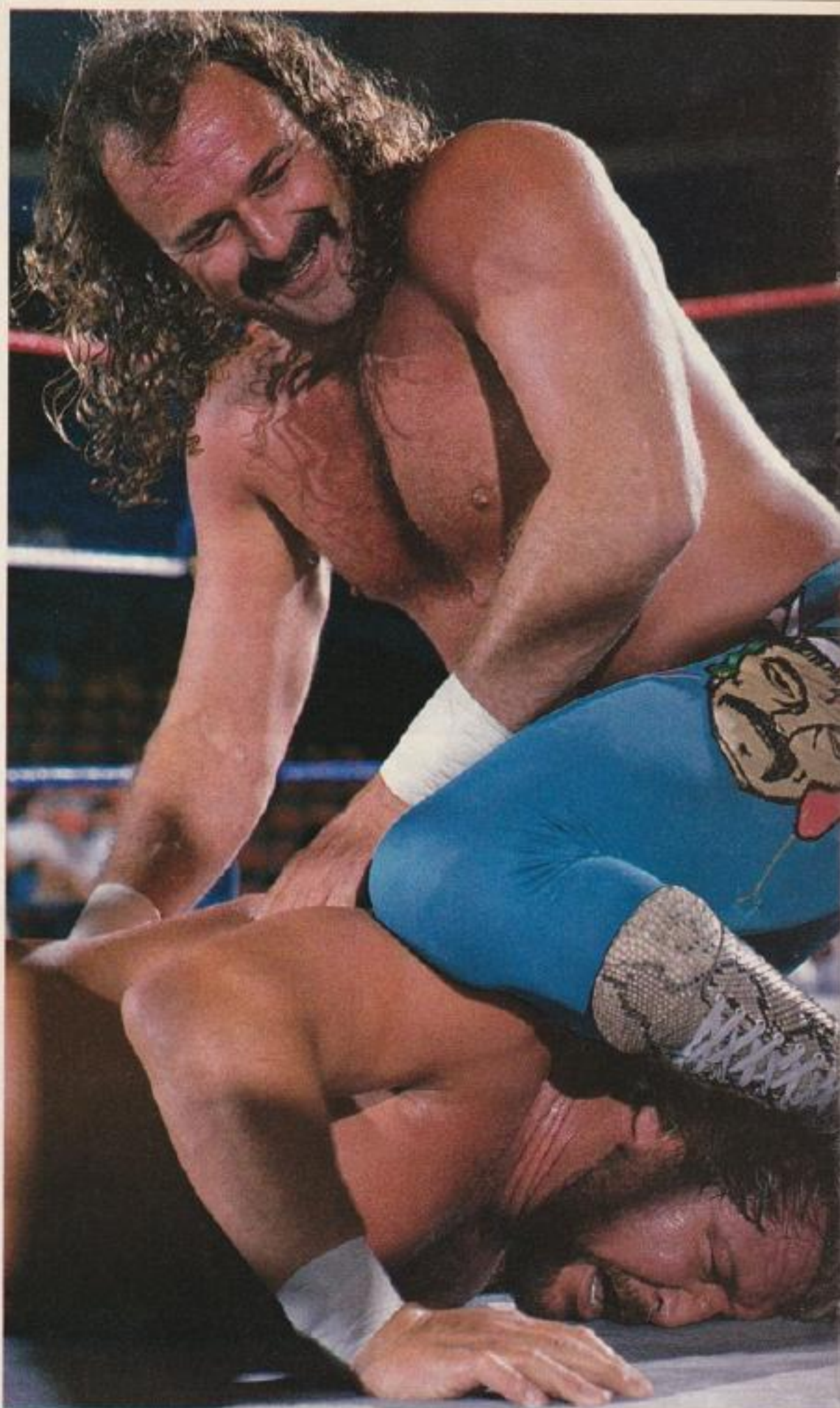


Above: The Snake catches the Ravishing One in an inverted stomachslam and hammerlocks Ted DiBiase, immediate right. After Roberts beats a foe, Damian slithers around.

bodyslams are so common in professional wrestling, many spectators do not pay close attention when one is delivered. However, Jake's bodyslams are as distinctive as they are crushing. He first astounds his opponent by lifting him off the mat *with one hand*. Then Jake pitches his foe across the ring like a softball. What makes this procedure particularly treacherous is the impairment of the victim's landing abilities.

"When someone scoops you up and slams you, you know it's going to hurt," says a wrestler who has worked out with the Snake. "But you sometimes have time to prepare yourself for the fall and can minimize injury by landing the right way. Jake throws you high into the air—you're flopping around like a bird without wings—and when you crash, it could be on your back, your shoulder or your head."

Jake is also an innovator with basic scientific holds. Knowing wrestling fundamentals so intimately, he makes fast transitions between common maneuvers, creating a rapid-fire offense that leaves the opposition dazzled. In a recent bout, he applied a hammerlock and switched to a wristlock and then an armbar. By the time he was through, his opponent's arm was permeated with pain and was all but useless.



When he feels it is appropriate, Roberts will stand in front of a foe in a wristlock, thrust a shoulder into the man's midsection and back-flip him while still holding tight. The result: a debilitated elbow that will give out the next time Jake's rival tries to execute a power move.

In addition to relying on combination maneuvers, Jake invents new moves in the heat of battle. During one televised bout, he positioned himself in front of his foe, crunched the man forward and wedged a forearm beneath his chin. Then the Snake used his free hand to grab the competitor's

leg and—in a show of power—hoisted him off the ground, horizontal to the mat, and dropped him across a bent knee.

Like his nickname suggests, Roberts thrives when the rules of the match are the laws of the jungle. He slithers and slides under the ropes and across the canvas like his python, Damian. If someone wrongs him, Jake will beat him down to the mat, driving knees into his floored opponent's sides and head over a dozen consecutive times. Roberts has his own style of punching, sometimes forcing a wrestler's chin into his chest while throwing fists into the man's midsection. The Snake rules outside the ring, whipping an opponent into a ring post or guard rail, or leading him on a chase back into the ring and surprising him with a kneelift as he steps through the ropes.

No matter whether he's abiding by the rules or bending them, Jake always fights a mental battle. During a simple collar-and-elbow lockup, he'll suddenly smile, intimidating and confusing an opponent about what will come next. When whipped into the corner, Roberts will motion an adversary to charge forward, greeting the competitor with a clothesline or big foot as he comes rushing in. Then there's Damian, sitting ominously in a sack in the corner, waiting to be poured on a vanquished rival.

Stroking the python, Roberts, with eyes glistening, claims that Damian is his most formidable weapon. "Are you scared of Damian? You shouldn't be—if you take the time to understand him. You see, when you understand the snake, you understand his terror, his fire and his potency. You know how to reach down and find the same inside yourself. If you don't understand the snake, all that power is a mystery. It's mystery that makes life exciting for Jake Roberts—and that makes life torture for his foes." **WF**

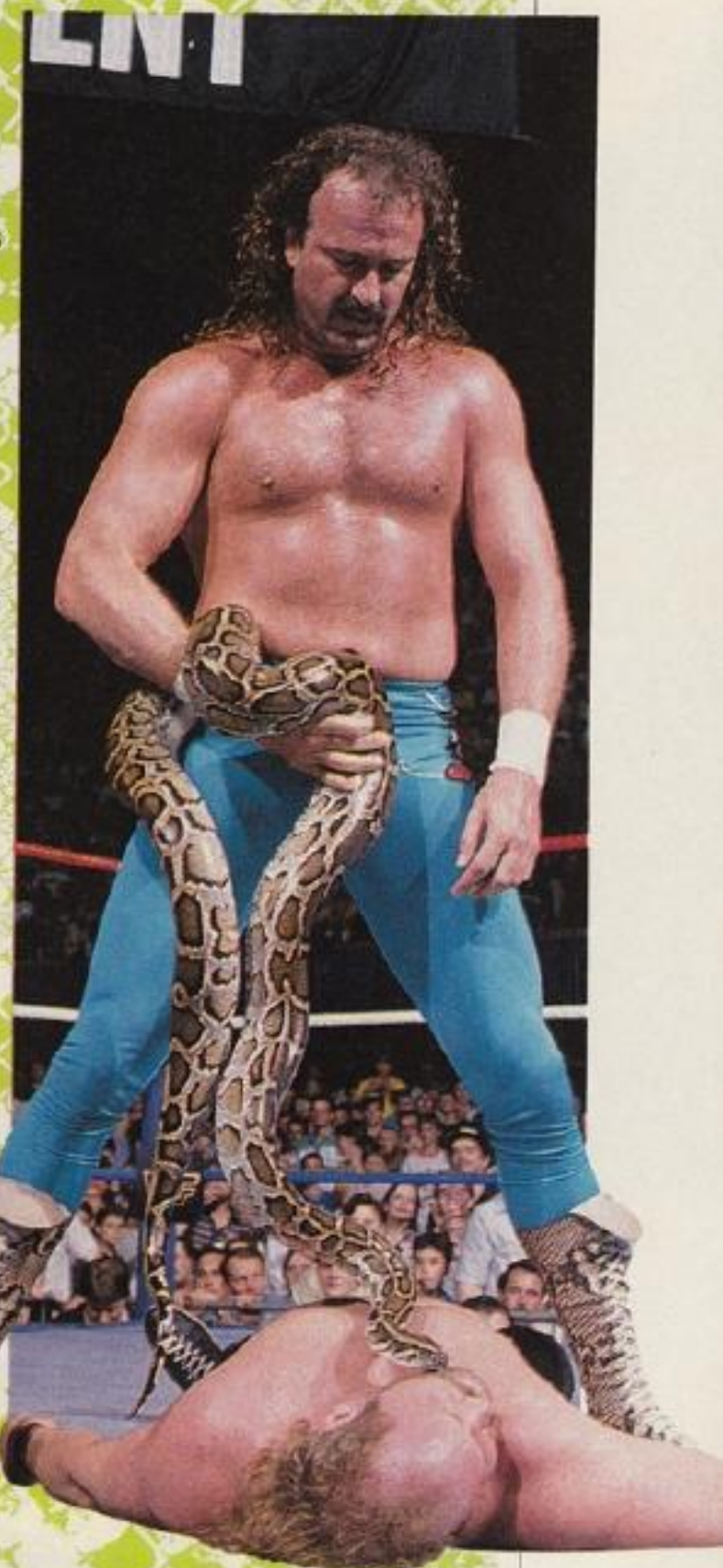
The Python-Jake's Image

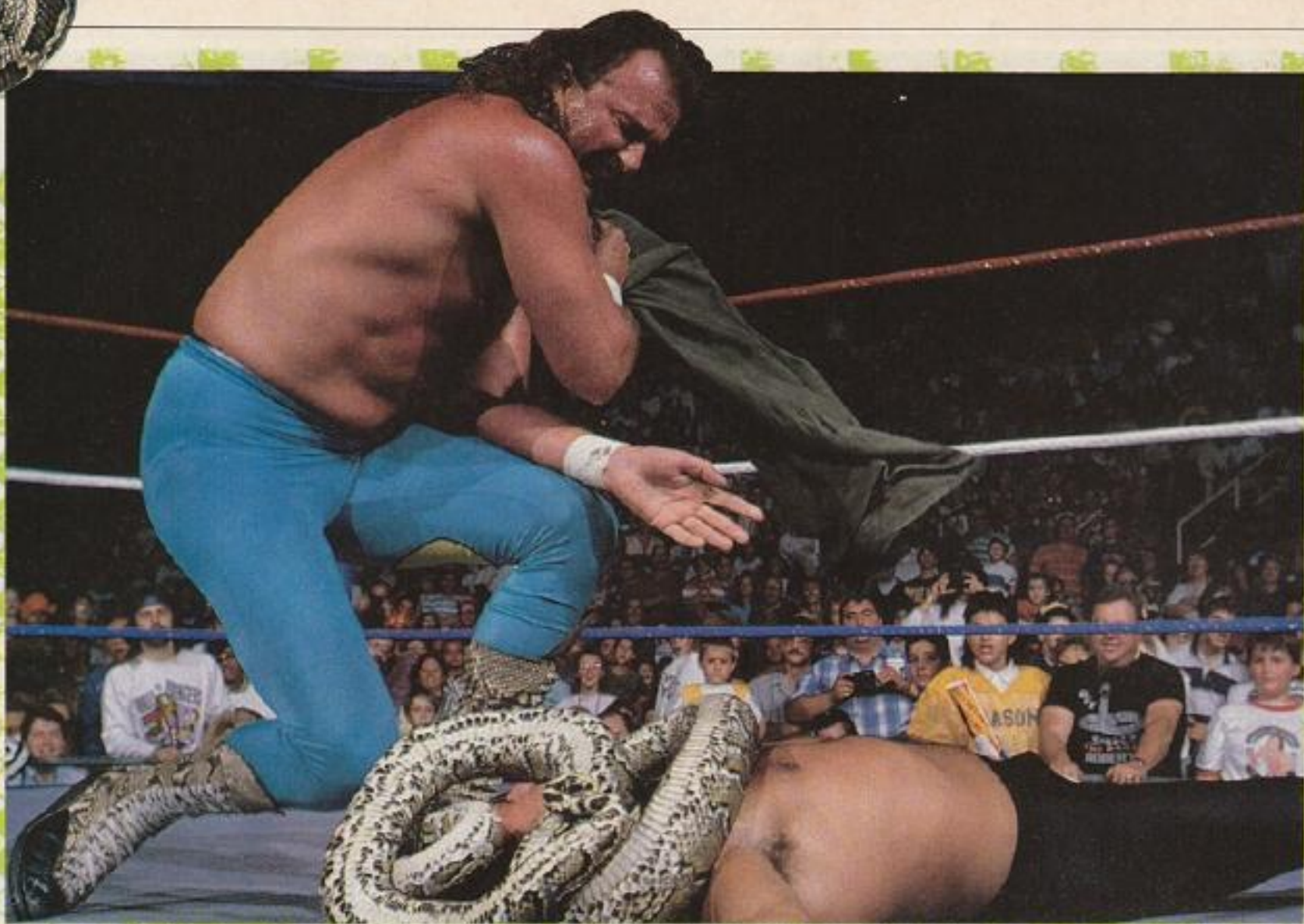
When Jake "The Snake" Roberts enters the ring, he is accompanied by his python, Damian. Of all snakes, Jake has picked the one that most represents him.

Pythons are among the world's giant constricting snakes. In fact, some pythons may be the longest snakes in the world, perhaps growing to a length of 30 feet—maybe even bigger. Several years ago, there was a report of a python killed on the island of Celebes, in the South Pacific, that measured 32 feet long.

Pythons are among the world's most ancient serpents. They—or snakes much like them—date back to the time of *Tyrannosaurus rex* and the other great dinosaurs. Like the dinosaurs, pythons are predators. Depending on their size, they prey on creatures from the size of rats and birds to animals as big as humans, such as wild boar and deer. On zoological record is the 18-foot python that attacked and swallowed a leopard, and suffered only a few scratches from the battle that got the snake the meal.

Like many other snakes, however, pythons have their role in nature. Just like Jake in the ring, they can be deadly, but their lethal behavior can often have beneficial results. Pythons control vermin, just like Jake does his best to control elements in the WWF that opt for the





cheap shot, the steal and the sneak win. If you're a poor peasant in the jungles of India, you don't want rats eating your food. Pythons destroy those rats. Jake, in his own way, does the same thing in the squared circle.

There's something else about pythons and Jake. Pythons have incredible natural camouflage. Pythons that hunt on the ground have color patterns that mimic leaves on the forest floor. Pythons that hunt in the trees are green, like leaves. Their prey is blind to the attacks that these snakes launch. That's exactly how Jake operates in the ring. He masks his intentions, then strikes lethally.

When a python strikes, it sinks its curved teeth into its victim. The prey cannot pull out of the grip of

those teeth. That's not much different from Jake. When he cinches in the DDT, his victim has little chance of breaking loose.

Once a python has gripped an opponent, the serpent wraps its steely coils around the victim and starts squeezing. Gradually, the breath goes out of the foe. It's down for the count. The snake extends its jaws and swallows.

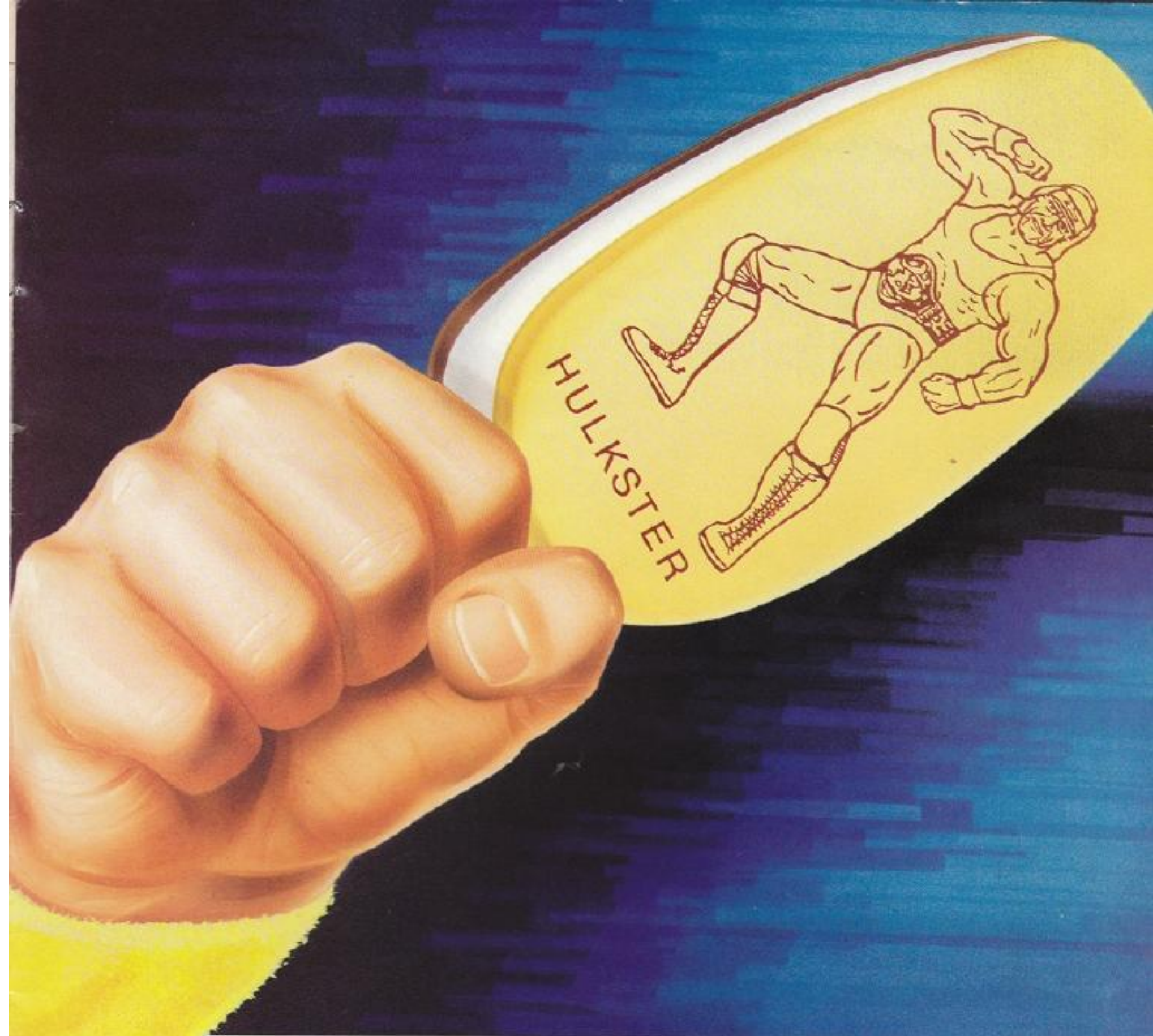
Once Jake wraps his serpentine arms around an opponent and with fluid power sets him up for the DDT, it's over, too. Jake knocks the breath and fight out of his adversary and makes the pin.

Like the python, Jake is strange, scary and a force to be admired. They both represent survival of the fittest in our world. They're basic. Many of us proba-

bly would like to be like them. No quarter given, none asked—only try to survive.

Pythons, like Jake, have also been associated with the mystical. Apollo, the Greek god who fired lethal arrows into those who transgressed, was accompanied by a python. In ancient times, the python also was said to be the one that predicted the future. Many ancient African tribes revered the python as a symbol of wisdom. There are things about pythons that are reflected in Jake Roberts. Reflected? Maybe. Or, perhaps pythons reflect this man with the cold eyes and instinct to survive, whatever the threats to his existence. **WF**





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